Class 92 Book L97boehmE

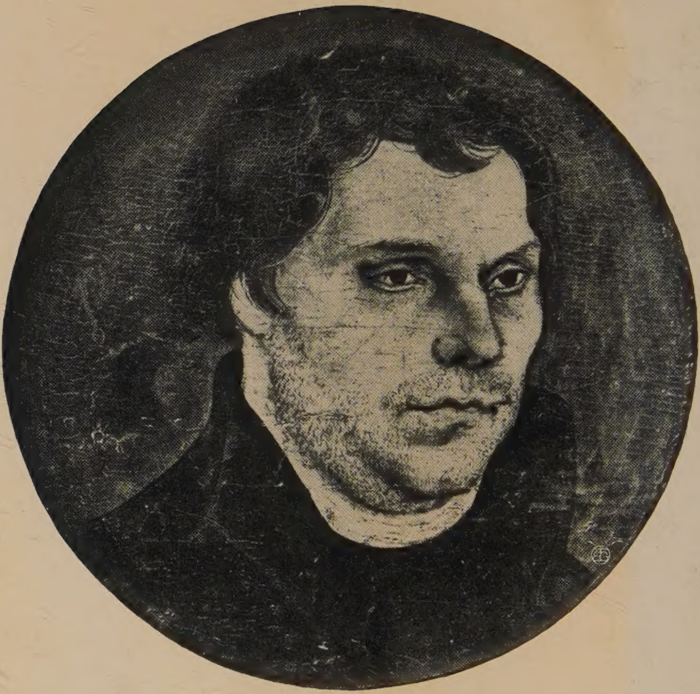
General Theological Seminary Library

CHELSEA SQUARE, NEW YORK

PRESENTED BY

Soc'y for Promoting Religion and Learning

LUTHER



LUTHER IN 1525

Probably painted on the occasion of his marriage: copy in the Lutherhalle at Wittenberg

[*Frontispiec*

LUTHER

& THE REFORMATION IN THE LIGHT OF MODERN RESEARCH

BY
HEINRICH BOEHMER
LATE PROFESSOR IN THE UNIVERSITY OF LEIPZIG

TRANSLATED BY
E. S. G. POTTER

GEN. THEO. SEMINARY
LIBRARY
NEW YORK

LONDON
G. BELL AND SONS, LTD.
1930

92
L97boehm E

90512

Printed in Great Britain by
Spottiswoode, Ballantyne & Co. Ltd.
London, Colchester & Eton

FOREWORD

THE late Dr. Heinrich Boehmer, one of Germany's leading Protestant ecclesiastical historians, was born in 1869, studied Theology and History at Leipzig and Berlin, and was Professor successively at Bonn, Marburg and Leipzig. English Church History and the Reformation and Counter-Reformation were the provinces he particularly made his own. His first important work was in connection with the *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*, especially the writings of the so-called "Yorker Anonymus." This was followed by his "Church and State in England and Normandy in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries" (1899), and studies in the Lanfranc forgeries. Among his later works are: "The Jesuits" (1904, 4th edition 1921), "Luther's Journey to Rome" (1914), "Studies in the History of the Society of Jesus" (1914), "Loyola and the German Mystics" (1921), "Luther as a Young Man" (1925).

The book here translated first appeared in 1904 under the title *Luther im Lichte der neueren Forschung*, and reached its 5th edition in 1918. Since its first publication it has been to a great extent re-written and enlarged to twice its original size.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

THE OLD CONCEPTION OF LUTHER AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF RESEARCH . . . . . . p. 1

The Old Conception of Luther

The typical picture of Luther. The genuine Cranachs. The Luther type in pictorial art probably a creation of the younger Cranach. Historical value of the type. The literary portraits of Luther and their historical value. History of the ideal type; the Luther of orthodoxy. The Luther of Pietism and the Enlightenment. The Romantics and Goethe on Luther. The Nationalist conception of Arndt and Jahn. Revival of older views in the nineteenth century. How Luther's enemies have portrayed him: the judgment of the Radicals. Development of the Catholic conception of Luther: the Devil's son and German Catiline. Approach to the Protestant view in the age of Enlightenment. Revival and modernisation of older conceptions in the nineteenth century: Luther regarded either as psychopath or moral decadent. Method of Catholic biographers still the same to-day as in sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Conclusions.

The Development of Research

Beginnings of criticism among Pietist historians and its transformation in the age of Enlightenment and idealistic philosophy. Development of research since Ranke. Problems of secondary importance. Luther's "suicide." The Confession of Worms. Principal conclusions and principal problems of research.

CHAPTER II

THE EVOLUTION OF THE REFORMER . . . . p. 31

The documentary evidence and the main problems of research

Luther's openness. Documentary evidence. Principal finds of the last 30 years. Historical significance of the Commentary on Romans of 1515. Grisar's psychological interpretation of the evidence on Luther's inward development supplied by the oldest commentaries and sermons. The true result of the unification dispute and the journey to Rome. The monk of liberal views and practice. Conclusion.

The Conversion

Version later given by Luther: the preface of 1545. Table-Talk on the *Turmerlebnis*. Other evidence. The alleged "fiction" concerning his life at the monastery. Psychological judgment of the autobiographical statements: comparison with the reminiscences and memoirs of Goethe, Bismarck, etc. Apparent contradictions in Luther's utterances. Explanation of these contradictions. The share of Occamism and Biel in his psychological struggles. Effect of the Occamist conception of God upon his state of mind. Modern theology the occasion, not the cause of his psychological struggles. Conclusion. Limitations of the result.

Luther's development after his conversion in the winter of 1512–13

Modern hypotheses and contentions. Occamist criticism of the Catholic system and its significance for Luther's development. Influence of St. Augustine, Dionysius Areopagitica and Bonaventura. The alleged Neo-platonism of Luther. Influence of Bernard of Clairvaux, of Johann von Staupitz. Luther's relation to German Mysticism. General significance of Mysticism for his inward development. His conception of asceticism and the Cross. Final judgment on Luther's outward and inward development. Luther's development from a theological polemic into a reformer: his connection with Crotus Rubeanus and Hutten. Historical significance of the Address to the Nobility. Conclusion.

CHAPTER III

THE EVOLUTION OF THE REFORMATION . . . p. 90

The dispute on the indulgence and its consequences

The 97 and 95 theses of 1517. The fight against the indulgence: its origin and history. Its significance in religious history. The Fugger and the indulgence trade. The Mainz indulgence of 1515. Luther's criticism and its scope. First steps of Albrecht von Mainz and the Curia against Luther. The denunciation by the Dominicans. Beginning of the heresy suit. New proceedings for notorious heresy. The Miltitziad. Resumption of the proceedings in January 1520. The Bull. Final judgment on the Bull and the lawsuit. Execution of the Bull by Eck and Aleander. Burning of the Bull by Luther. Policy of Friedrich the Wise. Luther's *Erbieten* of August 1520. Policy of the Elector at the Diet of Worms. The Edict of Worms. Historical consequences of the Edict.

The Wittenberg Reformation of 1521–22

Barge's theory. Luther's reform principles. Discussion of Barge's principal evidence: the Wittenberg *Beutelordnung* and the Municipal Ordinance of Wittenberg. Comparison of Luther's ideas with Karlstadt's. True course of the Wittenberg upheavals. Real causes of Luther's return from the Wartburg. Consequences and success of his return. Conclusions. Final judgment on Karlstadt.

CHAPTER IV

LUTHER AS SCHOLAR, ARTIST AND MORALIST; HIS PRIVATE CHARACTER . . . . p. 157

The Scholar and Artist

The work of Father Denifle and its continuation by Father Grisar. Luther the "crass ignoramus." The "simple soul" and "Northern barbarian": Luther's relation to learning, his scientific studies; to plastic and graphic art and architecture; to poetry; to music. His gift of observation. His feeling for Nature. Feeling and form with him are *unconsciously* artistic.

The Moralist; Luther's Private Character

"Barbarousness" and "boorishness" of Luther's methods of expression. The Table-Talk. Historical elucidation of his procedure as a writer. His anger and his love of fighting. Psychological and medical explanation : Luther's illnesses. Rivari's interpretation : Luther's alleged paranoia. Grisar's psychopathic interpretation : Luther's "complexes" ; his conception of humility. His "autochthonous ideas." His endogenous neurosis. Conclusion. The "bestial glutton and drunkard." History of the verse "Who loves not woman, wine and song." The "sensual debauchee and *Urist*." Melancthon's letter to Camerarius. Luther's own version of the history of his marriage. The "liar and falsifier" ; Luther's views on the various kinds of lie. His attitude towards the bigamous marriage of the Landgrave Philipp von Hesse. His views on the seal of the confessional. Conclusions.

Attempt at a positive appreciation of Luther's individuality

Comprehension of Luther's fundamental psychological attitude an essential condition. Comparison with Loyola and other exponents of the ethic of self-perfection. No tendency to formulate rules of conduct. Lack of economic sense and calculation. Conscience with him assumes the functions which middle-class morality assigns to prudent forethought. Freedom from anxiety and fear, from envy and jealousy. All his utterances typical of a man of faith. Influence upon those in immediate contact with him : the "Doctoress," Melancthon, Karlstadt. His greatness and the fatal element in his greatness. The tragic and daemonic element in his character and life. Conclusion.

CHAPTER V

THE THINKER AND PROPHET . . . . . p. 244

Unsystematic nature of and contradictions in Luther's thought. The problem. Attempt at a genetic analysis of his views : the heritage of the family, his superstition. The heritage of the school : Luther as an Occamist. Comparison with earlier critics and reformers. Apparent conclusion. Criticism of this conclusion : characterisation of Erasmus and the Erasmians. Judgment of the Apocalypse of St.

Michael; the lay religion and sense of vitality of the Renaissance. Luther the founder of a new religious outlook and a new moral ideal. Judgment of the result from the point of view of world history. Tröltsch's theory. Luther's religion and ethics not a mere "transformation of the mediaeval idea." The inward contrast between Protestant and Catholic Christianity. Relation of Lutheran and Primitive Christianity. Limitations of the result: mixture of mediaeval and modern conceptions in Luther's thought. Examples: Luther's estimation of marriage; of the State. His utterances on the relation of the secular power to public religious practice and on freedom of religion. Conclusions.

CHAPTER VI

DIRECT AND INDIRECT INFLUENCE ON THE CIVILISATION OF THE AGE . . . . p. 302

Luther fundamentally only a preacher, professor and spiritual pastor. Lack of interest in matters of ecclesiastical organisation. The new Liturgy. The new constitution. Defects in Luther's work. Comparison of Lutheranism and Calvinism.

Direct and indirect influence on the civilisation of the age.

Predominance of religion in mediaeval civilisation. Economic and social consequences of the Reformation. Political consequences: the new political problems and the new States. Condition of morality at the beginning of the sixteenth century. Influence of the Reformation. Influence of the Reformation on learning; on education; on the plastic and graphic arts; on poetry and music; on the development of the German language: the views of Grimm, Müllenhoff, Lagarde. Line to be followed in solving the problem. Luther as writer and stylist. His position in the development of language conditioned and limited by his influence as religious reformer. General conclusion.

APPENDICES

A. Pictures of Luther . . . . . p. 344
B. Chronological Summary of Luther's Life from 1483 (?) to 1518 . . . . . . p. 351
C. Luther's Father Guilty of Manslaughter . p. 357
D. The Ursula Legend . . . . . p. 359
E. Luther's Death . . . . . . p. 361

Bibliographical Notes . . . . . p. 363

Index . . . . p. 373

ILLUSTRATIONS

Luther in 1525 . . . . . . *frontispiece*
Luther: Relief from the Nikolaikirche at Döbeln . . . . *facing p.* 4

CHAPTER I

"Open thine eyes, and see me as I am."
DANTE.

THE OLD CONCEPTION OF LUTHER AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF RESEARCH

ONLY once in his life, probably, did Martin Luther on his own initiative have his portrait painted. Nevertheless, every semi-educated person still knows to-day exactly how he looked. In Germany even the school children, for the most part, know his face so well that they can pick it out without much trouble in pictures containing many figures, and little girls often need only to perceive with a rapid glance "what the man in the picture has got on" to arrive at the answer: that is Doctor Luther. It is certainly a matter for rejoicing that our posterity, more particularly the feminine portion of it, should be so well informed and so quick of perception, but undoubtedly it is due in part to the fact that the pictures of the reformer which they are able to see at home and at school are so remarkably alike. They practically all show a man in the comfortable fullness of age, with a broad peasant face, a strikingly well-developed lower jaw, a mild expression in the eyes, and altogether rather indeterminate features. But is this Luther in reality Luther the reformer? It is certainly the Luther that one confidently expects to see, on stepping before a statue or picture of him; that Luther whom Rietschel, after some hesitation, took as a model when he created his famous statue, though he knew very well that the true Luther of 1521 looked quite different; that Luther whom even the most extravagant artists depict again and again with astonishing constancy, and from the shape of whose head physiognomists and ethnologists, with the dash and boldness customary in their entertaining science, have so often proved that the reformer has Slavonic blood in his veins: for this Luther has a round skull, and whoever has a round skull is at least half Slav, even though, like the reformer, he has German peasants for ancestors and comes from a district in which, up to the present, no traces have ever been found of Slavonic settlements or any admixture of Slavonic blood. This Luther, then, is undoubtedly a type, a figure whose features are as firmly fixed in the minds of artists and their public as those of Germania, Helvetia, and other allegorical ladies. But even if he is a type, he is nevertheless not a freely invented and completely unhistorical type, such as the St. Peter and Charlemagne of mediaeval art, but the idealised version of an historical portrait, like Menzel's "Old Fritz" and Rauch's "Queen Louise." For who does not know that this type goes back finally to the absolutely innumerable pictures of Luther by the great master Lukas Müller von Cranach, and is found, already in its classic form, in this artist's most famous picture, the altar-piece in the town church at Weimar? Who has not read this in black and white, even in quite modern "works of advanced science" on Cranach and on Luther?

Such is, indeed, the prevailing opinion even to-day. But what "everyone" takes as correct is most often not true. If we once examine the artistic legacy of the elder Cranach impartially and with the assistance of an expert, we undergo one surprise, one disillusionment after another. For we learn, first, the disconcerting fact that this legacy, notwithstanding the centuries for which the history of art has been studied, has still not been thoroughly sifted; secondly, that at the present time only four portraits of Luther, two oil-paintings and two copper engravings,[1] are universally accepted as genuine Cranachs; thirdly, that the classic representation of the type, the Weimar altar-piece, is not the work of the elder Cranach, but is proved to have been painted not until two years after Cranach's death, by the painter's son, Lukas Cranach the Younger. Further, if we next look at the few indubitably genuine Cranachs, we see at once that the typical head of Luther does not go back to these genuine portraits, but to certain later works out of Cranach's studio, the authorship of which is still a disputable point. The most important of these are the so-called Epitaphium, a woodcut with an elegy for the death of Luther, and a wonderfully preserved oil-painting of 1546, discovered only in 1913, in the Lutherhalle at Wittenberg, the work of the younger Cranach, in whom we must see the true creator of the Luther type. But even in the Epitaphium the type gives a very different impression from that of the altar-piece at Weimar or the well-known pictures by Schwerdgeburth, Gustav König, Ludwig Richter, and Spangenberg: the features are much sharper and more virile, the mouth is firmly shut. Above the forehead the hair curls in some confusion. Between the brows is an angry vertical crease, and over the right eye scowls a mighty wart. Whether this is a faithful representation of Doctor Martin's face we cannot now definitely say. But we can say quite definitely that not one of the indubitably genuine portraits by the hand of the elder Cranach coincides entirely with the description of Luther's face and figure left us by Mosellan, Kessler, Melancthon and other contemporaries. Not one shows his remarkably upright, even stiff way of holding himself, "so that he leaned backward rather than forward"; not one conveys, however faintly, the expression of the dark daemonic eyes, "which sparkle and glitter like a star, so that it is hardly possible to look at them." These "falcon eyes," "leonine eyes," "basilisk eyes," which struck everybody at first sight, and this highly characteristic soldier-like bearing, so imposing in its effect, must be added by our imagination in looking even at these pictures. But imagination, alas! can never replace the actual visible representation which is lacking. Thus, in this case, though the genuine Cranachs may be most excellent in drawing, they are certainly not completely successful as portraits. Nevertheless, old Lukas remains the most able of the few artists who saw Luther face to face. His son, the younger Lukas, was far inferior, though he was still superior to the painters of the well-known pictures "Luther on his Deathbed" in Dresden and in the Leipzig Library, and the nameless modeller in wax who is responsible for the so-called "Death-mask" in the Marienbibliothek at

---

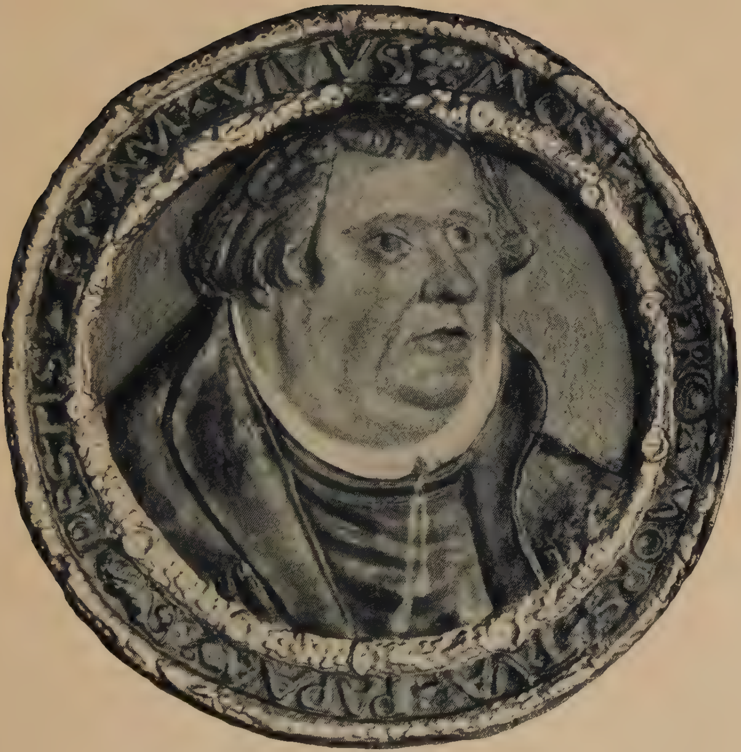
[1] *Cf.* Appendix A.

Halle.[1] The really great portrait painters of the sixteenth century, Dürer, Holbein, Amberger, to whom we are indebted for so many pictures of famous contemporaries, unfortunately never found an opportunity to see this most famous of all, Doctor Martinus. Dürer, indeed, seriously intended "to counterfeit the godly-spirited man who had helped him out of great fears, that he might long be remembered, and engrave him in copper," but he too, unfortunately, never went to Saxony. How much we have lost by this can be judged in some measure by comparing the pictures of Melancthon from Cranach's studio with Dürer's well-known engraving and Holbein's red-pencil drawing at Windsor. In the former Magister Philippus looks such a poor, hungry, miserable sinner that one feels almost ill to look at him. Even the best of them, the Wartburgbild, gives an impression of complete insignificance. Dürer and Holbein, on the other hand, make us realise at once that the *preceptor Germaniae* was a man of exceptional shrewdness and intellect: so much better did these great artists know how to render the intellectual expression of a face.

We must accustom ourselves, then, to the realisation that the pictures of Luther by the elder Cranach which are still in our possession are not many, but very few, and that among these few, though for the most part they are excellently drawn, there is not one really good and complete likeness; in other words, we must admit that we no longer know *exactly* what Luther was like. All the same, we shall do well in future to take our conception of the reformer only from those few undoubtedly genuine Cranachs, which date from the third decade of the sixteenth century, and, if we are anxious to have Luther as an old man also before our eyes, to hang beside them the recently discovered oil-painting

---

[1] This is not a death-mask, but the head, originally provided with a wig, of a Panopticon figure clothed in a preacher's gown of later date, made fast to the back of a Renaissance chair by a leather strap in the back; from the sleeves protrude hands which are laid on a table as if to write. The earliest evidence of the existence of this figure dates from 1742, *cf.* Appendix A.



LUTHER

Relief from the Nikolaikirche in Döbeln (showing the characteristic marks of the Luther type)

[*To face p. 4*

and the Epitaphium of 1546. The impeccably brushed, kindly, plump gentleman of fifty, on the other hand, into which the type has gradually been idealised by artists with more goodwill than knowledge of the facts, must be crossed out of our memory for ever, and after it we must send the new, so-called historical Luther which Hans Fechner put together in 1905 from several Cranach portraits (heliogravures at Stalling in Oldenburg).

But what does it matter, fundamentally, if we do not know, and have little chance now of ever learning, exactly how Luther looked, provided that we do know exactly what he did, what he was, what he thought and what he aimed at? That, indeed, is far more important. But it is not at all an easy matter to give a prompt and correct judgment as to what he did, was, thought, and aimed at. The Luther literature is now so comprehensive, with its two and a half thousand books and booklets, that it forms a whole little library in itself, and at the same time so many-tongued, many-sided and multiform that it strikes fear and dismay into the heart even to run through the endless succession of titles, or merely to attempt to keep in memory the names of the authors who have written biographies—more than 200 in number—of Luther, in Latin, German, French, English, Danish, Swedish, Italian, Spanish, Russian, Polish, and Lettish. But still more disconcerting is it to glance through a few dozen of these biographies, and perhaps half a dozen novels and dramas on Luther as well. The immediate impression is that there are as many Luthers as there are books on Luther: so widely divergent are the authors' views as to the character and value of Luther and his work. To some he appears a prophet of God, to others a changeling of Satan; to some the model of a good citizen, an excellent father, an affectionate husband, to others a criminal of the most profound moral perversion; to some as a productive genius of the most powerful kind, to others as an individual whose intellect was below the average, or, again, abnormal; to some as one of the most enlightened men of all times, to others as a reactionary, a toady and oppressor of the worst kind. Can it be that Luther was such a complicated and indefinite character, or is the information handed down concerning his life so defective, ambiguous and obscure that historians were necessarily bound to arrive at these totally different verdicts? Not in the least! The information available is as abundant, clear and consistent as could be desired, and Luther's character in the genuine documents gives absolutely no impression of exceptional complexity. The fault, then, lies this time with the historians: in part they would not see, in part obviously they could not see, what Luther was. And why? Because they approached the store of information with quite definite preconceived opinions, and so, naturally, their minds were only accessible to those parts of it which seemed in accordance with their views.

But they cannot be made solely responsible for this defect. They did their work, in most cases, under a psychological pressure from which they could not easily free themselves. They let themselves be guided in their judgments by the ideas and ideals of their various creeds and epochs, and quite involuntarily interpreted the sources in that sense. If we bear this in mind, the truly grotesque discrepancy of their conceptions becomes psychologically quite comprehensible. We then find even in this chaos a certain order, sequence and development, and learn to appreciate even the strangest products of this literature, not indeed as scientific achievements, but as historical documents—that is, sources for the history of religious, political and social ideas since the days of the Reformation.

In the first days of the Evangelical movement the Evangelical side generally regarded the reformer as a prophet of God. Even sober men like Albrecht Dürer referred to him as a "*gottgeistig*" or divinely inspired personage; more fervent natures sought and found in the Bible and in the words of mediaeval prophets predictions concerning him and his work, and enthusiastic artists would even represent him with the dove of the Holy Ghost, or with a halo about his head. In the most ancient Evangelical biographies, the sermons on Luther by Cyriacus Spangenberg and Johann

Mathesius, the influence of this view is still to be perceived, though it does not in any way dim their vision of the reformer's errors and weaknesses or prejudice the freedom of their judgment. Mathesius, however, once or twice emphatically stresses as the greatest merit of his hero the fact that he "restored the purity of doctrine." This heralds a new conception of Luther's character and work, which was already current in many circles at that time, and which was to persist until the last decades of the seventeenth century: the dogmatic conception of Lutheran orthodoxy. Orthodoxy indeed held fast to the belief that Luther was the prophet of Germany; but it took as the chief proof of his prophetic mission the concordance of his teaching with the teaching of the Gospels. In consequence it involuntarily touched up the picture of the reformer on the model of the traditional Catholic conception of a Father of the Church. The people, however, revered Luther not only as a Father of the Church, but also as a kind of saint; they told strange things of his prophecies, miracles and visions, and zealously cut splinters from the wooden pillars of his house at Wittenberg, for these splinters, like the relics of St. Apollonia in Catholic districts, were regarded among the Lutherans as an excellent cure for toothache. It was Pietism which first broke, on these points, with the habits and views of orthodoxy. The Pietists revealed the distinction between Luther and Lutheranism, and occasionally even placed the two in strong contrast. They already distinguished also between Luther as a young man, a man in middle life, and an old man, and criticised the two latter very freely, calling the early Luther to witness against his later self, for practically all Pietists disapproved of Luther in his middle period, the period of the Marburg Conversation. On Luther the old man they mostly bestowed a favourable judgment, in agreement with Albrecht Bengel, the gentle patriarch of the Swabian *Stundenleute*. But they all felt real enthusiasm only for the young Luther. Him they prized most highly, not only as a "father of the faith," a man powerful in prayer, a second Samson, victor over priests and Philistines, but also as the true originator of the ideal of the pietistic community, the "little Church within the Church." Indeed, the greatest and most gifted of these Pietist venerators of Luther, Ludwig Zinzendorf, saw the salvation of theology in a return to the theological method of Dr. Luther, and even made several attempts to carry out this reform.

The Enlightenment in its religious outlook was so far removed from Luther that any comprehension of him as a religious personality was utterly impossible to its disciples. His psychological struggles seemed to them a disease, his doctrine of sin and justification at best an "error" or "the unhealthy dogmatic extravagance of a great and daring, but sometimes one-sided mind." Even honest Protestants agreed with Semler in ranking the "learned and righteous Erasmus" above him. Judges who were completely indifferent in matters of religion, however, labelled him, as Frederick the Great did, simply as a "raving monk and a barbarous writer," or else, with Voltaire, as a man who missed his vocation. Yet even these Radicals found themselves in sympathy with one side of the reformer of the Church—namely, his enmity towards the priests and his zeal for freedom of conscience. The milder advocates of rationalism also appreciated the reformer mainly as the enemy of priests and the restorer of free conscience, but they also prized him highly as the "affectionate husband, just father, magnanimous friend, excellent citizen and public-spirited scholar." Even at the jubilee celebrations, as late as 1817, the eulogies and poems in his honour are composed entirely in this key. Witness the beautiful "New Year's Song for 1817": "Listen, masters, and hear these tidings—the mind no longer lies in chains. Think ye on Luther, that just man, who won back this liberty. Guard the light, the light of truth. Guard the fire, nor profane it."

Meanwhile the spirit of the times expresses itself, perhaps even more characteristically than in these eulogies, in the critical observations which are occasionally heard. All that the Pietists had found so painful—the joy Luther found in singing, in a game of chess or a good glass of wine, his mild verdict on dancing and play-acting—called forth high praise from the German *Aufklärer*; but so much the more gravely did they deprecate the disrespect with which the reformer so often spoke of the princes and the great Hansas, so much the more vigorously did they condemn that action which most of all ran counter to their ideas of right and becoming conduct in a citizen, the public burning of the Papal Bull. Yet even at the apogee of Enlightenment we meet here and there some deeper understanding of Luther's individuality. Hamann, during this period, strove to comprehend the reformer once more as a prophet and to explain psychologically the difficult and paradoxical aspects of him; and Herder in his youth occasionally made an attempt to throw overboard all the artificial standards of Enlightenment, Pietism and orthodoxy in his judgment of Luther, and to understand the "great patriot" as an independent phenomenon, working from within, from the depths of his particular individuality. But at the time nothing came of these incomplete attempts. Herder himself in later years returned to the method and historical outlook of the *Aufklärung*; and even Schiller, who among the intellectual leaders of Germany at that time had the greatest interest in history, could find no higher title of honour for Luther in his secular poem of 1800 than that of a "protagonist of the freedom of reason against illusion and the Vatican." Among the Romantics, however, a new conception of personality makes its appearance, and one which might well benefit Luther: the consideration of individual life from the point of view of the *aesthetic* ideal. According to this view, the worth of a human being consists not in the good he does to his contemporaries and to posterity, nor in his moral perfection, but solely and exclusively in the force, originality and abundance of his nature—in a word, his genius. But the Romantics were unable to find the right approach to this particular genius, to whom they were so little akin. Schelling saw in the Reformation nothing but decadence and retrogression, and even Schleiermacher had so little idea of Luther's unique religious outlook that he was capable of stating, in his lectures on ecclesiastical history, that "the Hussite Movement and the Lutheran Reformation were based upon the same principles." Instead, therefore, of painting a vivid picture of Luther before the eyes of his audience, he warns them against exaggerating the importance of reformers, with the extremely modern affirmation that "they merely formed prominent points of concentration for forces already in existence." On the other hand, the Romantic assessment of personality is seen at work, still intact, in the utterances of Goethe in his old age concerning the reformer. When he declares in 1817 that Luther's character is the only thing in that "confused wrangle," the history of the Reformation, which interests him; when in 1826 he announces his lively admiration for the unity and completeness so outstanding in Luther's thoughts, words and actions, this is wholly in accord with the aesthetic outlook on history of the early Romantics. Yet the great poet is no longer entirely under the spell of the aesthetic view of the world. "Genius" is to him not merely the instinct for the harmonious development of one's own existence, but "productive force by whose agency arise deeds which can show themselves before God and in Nature, and which, precisely for that reason, have consequences and are of lasting worth." From this standpoint he also appreciates Luther, in 1827, as "a genius of the most significant kind," whose influence has not ceased and shows no signs of ceasing. But while the aesthetes, serenely ignoring the brutal notes of the present, were building their fairy palaces, the ignominy of foreign domination broke upon Northern Germany. There resulted from this an immediate and complete revolution of feeling in North and South. In place of self-sufficient aesthetic and philosophical culture, nationalist enthusiasm came to the fore, in place of soaring intellectualism a mistrust and even hatred of the cult of formal beauty, and the raw emotion of political passion. Thereby the nation's judgment of its own history was also necessarily transformed. Turning away almost with contempt from Frederick the Great, people began, on the example of Arndt and Jahn, to acclaim Luther as a national hero, the prototype of German piety, manly courage and love of freedom, naïvely placed him side by side with old Blücher, and pressed the reformer into the service of the purely political ideals of the time. Among the rising and ambitious Liberal middle classes, however, this new nationalistic conception was partly mingled with the old Rationalist view of the reformer, and they therefore, with Leberecht Uhlich, Baltzer and other Rationalists, prized the hero of Wittenberg not only as a great German, but as a protagonist of enlightenment. But in this particular stratum of the population, especially after Herwegh's triumphant progress through Germany, interest in Luther was greatly diminished by the enthusiasm felt for the newly discovered national "saviour" Ulrich von Hutten, whose rolling catchwords were, indeed, far more to the taste of the political poets and journalists than the utterances of "Father Luther," completely devoid of that type of emotionalism.

Liberalism, however, was never master of public opinion in the same degree as the *Aufklärung*. On the contrary, intellectual evolution from the time of Romanticism onwards enters upon a phase of progressive disunion and divergence. This tendency manifests itself very characteristically in the judgments passed on Luther and his work. All the different conceptions of the earlier stages of development undergo a kind of resurrection in the course of the nineteenth century. But the simplicity and certainty with which former generations fought for their beliefs are now lacking. For no party can now altogether escape the influences of historical criticism, and each therefore finds itself compelled to defend its standpoint against conflicting views. The strict Neo-Lutherans in their conception of history depict Luther once more as a Father of the Church. For this reason they return as far as possible to the outlook of Lutheran orthodoxy, dismiss the young Luther as a "character not yet clarified, flinging itself about in a maze of subjectivist extravagances" (Kliefoth), and only accept as their master and model the Luther of the middle and last periods. The radical Protestants of the Tübingen group, on the other hand, of whom Heinrich Lang may be considered a characteristic representative, will hear nothing of the Luther of middle life and old age. They revere only the early Luther, and him only in so far as he is a "genius and national hero." Luther the reformer appears to them merely a representative of the Catholic outlook on life, in no wise the equal of men such as Zwingli, Karlstadt, and the leaders of the Anabaptists and the rebellious peasants. Next Albrecht Ritschl attempted to understand the reformer once more as a religious prophet. Therefore he departed as far as possible from Lutheran orthodoxy, and it was the young Luther that he particularly acclaimed. The great achievement of Luther the prophet was to him, however, the setting up of a "new ideal of perfection." This ideal proved, indeed, on closer examination to be not a genuine Lutheran product, but a cross between true Lutheran thoughts and the fundamental religious and moral views of the old rationalism. It is therefore no matter for wonder that Ritschl's disciples made a partial return, in giving judgment on Luther, to the conception of the radical *Aufklärer*. Harnack's "History of Dogma" marks the first step in this direction. Here Luther is drawn more in accordance with the views of orthodoxy, very sharply criticised on certain points, and the "great period of his life," the years 1519–1521, estimated as a mere episode, in which Luther "was not himself, but was carried away outside the bounds of his true being." Then the standpoint of the Enlightenment is reached once more, though strongly modified in detail by the outlook of Romantic philosophy and of modern religious criticism, in the modern writings of Ernst Tröltsch. Here, as formerly in Semler's attempt at free theological teaching, Erasmus of Rotterdam is placed above Luther, and Luther's religious outlook, as before in Heinrich Lang's "Luther," is regarded as a mere variation of the "mediaeval idea." Whilst theology was thus approaching once more the idea and methods of the

Enlightenment, the aesthetic philosophy of Romanticism was regaining a great influence in the circles of general culture, principally through Friedrich Nietzsche.[1] The "genius" of Luther, however, was and is to these Neo-Romantics even more unsympathetic, as a rule, than to those of the older generation. "The plebeian, the vulgar peasant, unable to see beyond his own hobnailed boots," the "barbarian," the "demagogue," who "stirred up the Peasants' Revolt of the North against the Church's Southern model hierarchy, which assured the highest rank to the men of superior intellect," "the German monk who, filled with all the vengeful instincts of a priest, ruined Europe's last great harvest of culture, the Renaissance, and brought to nothing the possibility, terrible yet brilliant with the promise of refined beauty, that Cesare Borgia (*ob.* 1507 !), as Pope, might abolish Christianity"—this Luther appears to many of the Neo-Romantics a pitifully small figure beside such a supposed superman as that wild Pope's son, in whose person "Life itself, the triumph of Life, the great cry of welcome to all high, lovely, desperate things," grasped at mastery in the Church. When, as is not infrequently the case, these Neo-Romantics are accessible to the religious mood, they generally turn to Pantheism, as the old Romantics did before them, and so naturally, like their forerunners, regard the reformer as the representative of an outworn piety, a Judaist, who, though he learned much from them, is of less stature than the men of God of the last flowering time of Germanic religion, the mystics of the fourteenth century. In the popular literature of recent times and of the present, all these changes of judgment concerning the reformer and his work show remarkably little trace. Here the "respectable middle-class" conception of commonplace rationalism is still, in essentials, the prevailing one: "the affectionate husband, the just father, the true friend, the public-spirited scholar, the model citizen, the great patriot, the valiant fighter against Rome." All that is bitter and coarse, raw and violent, popular and primitive, is here smoothed away from the reformer's countenance; the lion becomes a tame house cat, the terror of all Philistines a tame Philistine of the true German type, who, though he often grumbles and storms in the manner of the domestic tyrant, would not really hurt a fly.

---

[1] The latter was further entirely under the influence of Janssen: *Briefe* (Inselverlag, Leipzig, 1911), p. 222.

But it has long been made impossible for this Philistine view of history and its heroes to spread too far.

A famous lawyer once said: "The German people has loved three men—Charlemagne, Luther and Bismarck." With equal justice might it be said: The German people has hated three men—Charlemagne, Luther and Bismarck. But none has it loved and hated more strongly, none, perhaps, does it love and hate more genuinely, even to-day, than Luther. Indeed, hatred and distaste towards the reformer are to-day perhaps more widespread, and they are certainly more active, than love; for precisely those circles which govern the masses have little or no use for him.

This aversion and enmity were shared actually during the reformer's lifetime by two powerful parties, in other matters passionate foes—revolutionary Radicalism and the Catholic party. Each, in order to discredit Luther's teaching, attacked him personally, and in this endeavour they sketched a picture of the reformer and his character as different from the ideal portraits of the Protestants as night from day. The portrait of Luther adopted by revolutionary Radicalism takes its lines originally from Karlstadt and Thomas Münzer. It was further developed, however, only in the nineteenth century by Zimmermann, Kautsky, Blos, the historians of the radical middle classes and of Social Democracy; somewhat less highly coloured and improved to suit National-Socialist taste, it quite recently found a full embodiment in Barge's "Karlstadt," and it is even now to be met with, though with certain differences of light and shade, and based upon somewhat different arguments, in the historical works of the radical Pietists, Darbyites, Adventists, Pentecostals and all the rest of them.

Historical judgment is here founded exclusively on the reformer's aversion to Karlstadt, Münzer, Schwenckfeld and Company, and the attitude adopted by him in the Peasants' War. The former earns him the honourable title of "spiritless, soft-living lump of flesh," the latter the charming epithets of bloodthirsty oppressor, base fawner on princes, monkish enemy of the people, etc. But Radicalism has never troubled very much about history. The Catholic party, on the contrary, has from the first been at great pains to find in history weapons wherewith to fight present battles. Before the Lutherans had yet found time to compose a detailed biography of Luther there had already appeared (1549) the first Catholic biography. Its originator was an old adversary of the Evangelicals, who, ever since the Diet of Worms, had been indefatigable in his duel with the reformer—the Canon of Breslau, Johann Dobneck, surnamed Cochlaeus.

The picture of Luther drawn in his book is the complete antitype of the ideal portrait of Protestantism. Luther, represented on the one hand as "divinely inspired," is here depicted even more emphatically as a child of Satan—the Devil Incarnate having begotten him in adultery with Margarete Luther. Even as a child the wretch showed such a strange, wild disposition that his own mother regretted in after years that she had not murdered the changeling in his cradle. At the monastery, too, certain penetrating brothers soon discovered which spirit's child he was; later it became impossible for any intelligent person to remain in doubt in the matter. At his death the mysterious "Lord and Father" also, of course, played a part. He appeared punctually, and in his own person, to carry away his faithful evangelist to Hell. This conception of Luther as the Devil's son enjoyed the highest approval in the Catholic world until well into the eighteenth century. But even in the sixteenth century it was not invariably considered necessary to conjure up Satan as an explanation to the problem of Luther. Now and then the reformer was allowed to pass as a human being, but he was then portrayed, as by Thomas Murner as early as 1520, as a German Catiline, a great criminal, or else, as by Pallavicini, as a wild Cyclop, whose strong and fruitful mind brought forth only gigantic abortions, and whose much-prized courage was simply the courage of a desperate beast. This view, too, met with wide success; in Bavaria, for instance, the peasants used still at the beginning of the nineteenth century to march Doctor Luther along in their Shrove Tuesday processions side by side with the Bavarian "Hiesl" and the famous "Schinderhannes."

But in the Age of Enlightenment the educated Catholics drew surprisingly near the enlightened Protestants in their view of the necessity and value of the Reformation or "correction of the Church." A "precious instrument of God," a "great spreader of light," a "worthy character," the "greatest benefactor of humanity,"—such was the judgment now passed on the reformer even by Catholic theologians. A few of these theologians, certainly, emphasised even more strongly than Semler the superiority of Erasmus over Luther: indeed, Franz Berg, the Professor of Ecclesiastical History at Würzburg (*ob.* 1821), descended to the very modern-sounding affirmation that the doctrine of justification was no less a product of superstition in Luther's hands than in the hands of St. Paul, and that the Reformation was a hindrance to enlightenment in just the same measure as the Counter-Reformation. In general, however, the tone of joyous approbation prevails, and the feeling of spiritual kinship. One or two Catholic Romantics, such as Eichendorff, and converts of Romantic tendencies, such as Leopold Stolberg, also express lively sympathy for "Luther's heroic and completely popular personality." But after the July Revolution opinion swings round once more. The old conception comes into honour again, in this matter as in others, though with modern qualifications and a far more skilful choice of reasons. Even such shrewd and intellectual scholars as Adam Mohler suddenly find themselves talking again of a very intimate relationship between Luther and Satan; but they fight shy of calling the child by his right name, and do no more than indicate the ghastly secret with tentative words. There is a feeling now, however, that it is not quite up to date to cite the Devil as the solution of a psychological problem. Therefore people prefer to explain Luther's "possession," as Friedrich von Merz did as early as 1810, as a kind of mental disease, or state regretfully, with the Austrian monk and alienist Bruno Schön, that the so-called greatest son of the German people suffered at least at times from a persecution complex and from megalomania, hallucinations, illusions, excessive sexual excitement and "intermittent mental derangement." If the reformer is not regarded as actually of unsound mind, he is portrayed, as by the Jesuit Hartmann Grisar in recent times, at least as a monomaniac burdened with endogenous neurosis, inclining to "autochthonous ideas" and complexes; or else his judges, with the jurist Jarcke, benevolently take into account, when forming an opinion of his theologoumena, the exceptionally stubborn indigestion from which he is said to have suffered. But to treat the heretic as a sick man involves a loss of the right to drag him before the judgment seat of morality. For this reason, when in doubt, people decide to return to the conception of the culprit as a German Catiline, a view represented by Thomas Murner as long ago as 1520.

But they go to work far more cleverly and cautiously than the old mendicant friar. Luther is no longer described shortly as a great criminal, but depicted, in the cool tones of the hardened criminologist, as a man impure through and through and profoundly immoral (Döllinger, Janssen, Audin, Maraval, Grisar); or he receives the official title of "Superman" (Denifle)—which, however, is only a pretty name for an inhuman criminal, a scoundrel, a decadent type and a specimen of the deepest moral perversion and depravity.

The tone of these ostensibly historical polemics has thus, if they are regarded as a whole, been considerably refined in the course of the centuries. Whereas their representatives once painted their picture with dung, so that the Lutherans spoke not unjustly of "wallowing in the *excrementis Lutheri*," they now frequently show admirable skill in hiding their deeply rooted disgust at the arch-heretic behind the cold mask of the impartial judge. Their method, on the other hand, still follows in essentials the tried masters and models of the wild days of the religious wars. Within limits, they let the facts speak for themselves, but only those facts which support their own point of view, and they appoint Luther as his own judge, whilst carefully collecting from among his words and activities all those which seem to throw a bad light on his character; and they do not always tell the whole story even of these manifestations, but tear them out of their natural context and interpret them falsely at every opportunity—as Grisar has now done. This ingenious method, the most skilful representatives of which are Döllinger and Janssen, is now more than 300 years old, for its real founder is the Hessian doctor, Johann Pistorius, who died in 1608. Pistorius had already published many polemical writings when he hit upon the idea, very natural to a physician, of dissecting the dead Luther retrospectively. With this object he read the works of the "devilish creature" through from A to Z three times, and gathered together a huge collection of quotations which were to prove irrefragably that the so-called reformer was possessed of no fewer than seven evil spirits—the spirits of the flesh, of vice, of sloth, of error, of blasphemy, of pride, and of giddy inconstancy. This collection of quotations, full of genius or at least of "genii," nourished the whole of Catholic polemics for the next two hundred years. Most of his successors, however, knew how to strike the popular note even better than the furious doctor. The Jesuit Conrad Vetter, for instance, in his "Clear Proof," introduced himself under the innocent mask of an arch-Lutheran theologist, and then proceeded to gather from the inexhaustible stores of the Swabian dialect such a choice bouquet of popular epithets that the Germanist may even to-day profit by the study of it. He was, if possible, surpassed by the Strassburg priest Nikolaus Weislinger. The very title of his book, *Friss Vogel oder Stirb*, which first appeared in 1723, promises the reader an uncommonly pleasant entertainment. Nor is this hope deceived, for in the book itself the *sacrae theologiae polemicae studiosus* reads such a text to the godless heretic, the stinking profligate, the filthy ragamuffin, the ribald brawler, the obscene, slanderous and execrable Luther and all the verminous Lutheran rabble of filthy vagabonds, that the reader's senses are almost overwhelmed. Such a genius for obscenity, however, might at all times count on finding a grateful public in Germany. It is thus no wonder that Weislinger and his fellow-fighters, both older and younger, are still much read, made use of and even imitated. The ex-Jesuit Berlichingen has in the present century tried Luther's case quite in the style of Weislinger, and even the learned Father Denifle has not scorned to draw on the rich treasury of these obscene old polemics, and here and there to copy their vivid and racy style.

"Love is blind, but hate has a sharp eye," says the proverb. With equal right it may be maintained that hate is blind, and love has a sharp eye. But this, too, would be only half a truth. There is a blind love and a blind hate. Luther's posthumous history, both in pure literature and works of erudition, is a staring proof of this. He who seeks the true Luther will never find him here: he will remain for ever in uncertainty as to the real nature of this man of many names—a prophet of God or a son of the Devil; a Father of the Church or a godless heretic; the ideal of a true evangelical teacher and man of prayer or a great criminal; an apostle of enlightenment and intellectual liberator of the greatest type, or the annihilator of Europe's last harvest of culture; "a genius of the most significant kind," or a feeble-minded degenerate, even a poor crazy wretch; the greatest son of the German people, or a German Catiline who is answerable for the moral and intellectual downfall of Germany in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; the prototype of a blind, raging revolutionary or a bloodthirsty oppressor and base panderer to princes;

a "loving husband, just father, sincere friend, public-spirited scholar and excellent citizen" or a "senseless beast, foul hog, inconstant weathercock, frivolous liar, shameless sensualist, violent wrangler, hyperbolical windbag, insolent Goliath, babbler of ribaldries and public ravisher of nuns." Whosoever would really learn to know the reformer must turn away from these wild caricatures and these all too sugary ideal portraits, and seek him where alone he is to be found—in the genuine original documents.

But the genuine original documents, like precious metals, seldom offer themselves in such a pure, unmixed and convenient form as to be accessible to the first outstretched hand. The evidence must in most cases be first sought for and disinterred in libraries and archives, separated from spurious elements—and even then, like gold, it will profit only those who know how to value it and put it to good use.

The age of orthodox Lutheranism and the Counter-Reformation thought that it knew what Luther was without having recourse to these original sources of information. It therefore took no especial trouble to collect the reformer's works and the documentary evidence concerning his life, and used these works and documents only to prove that he was a divinely inspired saint or an arch-heretic and great criminal. In the age of Pietism this purely dogmatic conception of history ceased in the Lutheran camp. Criticism awoke, and with it the interest of the learned world in Luther's life and deeds. Veit Ludwig of Seckendorf then presented for the first time a history of the Reformation based on documentary research, in which, though its title indicates an apologia, the scholarly desire to collect impartial evidence is already to the fore; Valentin Ernst Löscher, J. C. Kapp and S. Cyprian now collected from libraries and archives documents bearing on the history of the Reformation, and the indefatigable Georg Walch in 1740 set about the preparation of a new complete edition of Luther and composed the first impartially erudite—in some respects monstrously erudite—biography of the reformer. In the age of enlightenment this scholarly diligence in the collection of evidence gradually fell off. The race of antiquaries died out. Very little research on Luther, in the narrower sense, was carried out. But the little that was done reveals very clearly the spirit of the age. Efforts were made, though indeed with very inadequate means, to collect those documents in which the particular Luther who was then understood—the head of a household, the educator, the friend, the citizen—expresses himself most freely : Luther's letters. For the rest, students followed Semler's advice, and satisfied themselves with forming extracts from the reformer's best-known works. Only in extracts, they opined, was Luther still "useful" reading. Plebeian as this constant quest for the "useful," even in scientific work, appears to us to-day, we must nevertheless not ignore the advance in the writing of history for which the *Aufklärung* was responsible. It required of the historian complete intellectual penetration of his material, psychological elucidation of events, scrupulous study of their connection, vigorous emphasis of the essential and suppression of all purely antiquarian accessories. Their psychology, admittedly, was indescribably elementary, and their understanding of the inward connection between events excessively superficial, but at least they overcame the limited view and laboured method of the old antiquaries. Romanticism, and the idealistic philosophy it brought forth, put an end to this purely atomistic conception of history, but they only drove out Baal to bring in Beelzebub. Their representatives recognised, indeed, that human intentions and the attempts to realise them are of little significance in history, they discovered the "unconscious" and the idea of evolution, they banished chance into outlawry ; but in doing so they fell unawares into the toils of a new mythology, conceiving history as the thought-process of Universal Reason, carried out in accordance with strict laws, so that the philosopher as the organ of this Universal Reason was now in the happy position of being able to vaticinate concerning the unknown prehistoric past and the equally unknown future with the same certainty as upon the history of ages rich in documentary evidence. As the Romantics, in accordance with this theory, regarded individual life only as the organ of Universal Reason, the distinctive attribute of which was thought, they were quite incapable of appreciating, to say nothing of understanding, a man like Luther, the governing factor in whose life appears to have been an entirely personal experience, and one which cannot be apprehended as a process of thought. Then appeared Leopold von Ranke. He realised that it was not the function of the historian to adjust the past to his views, nor yet to edify his contemporaries for the benefit of future years. He allotted him only the modest task of "showing what really happened"—requiring him to ascertain the true facts from the genuine sources at his disposal, and then purely and simply to state the result of these facts, without letting the tale be confused by the over-loud voice of his own enlightened reason. Hereby Ranke not only put an end to the old subservience of history to philosophy and religion, but also showed for the first time a sure way to objective appreciation of much-debated characters such as Loyola and Luther. In his "History of the Reformation in Germany" this possibility became fact. Since then, and only since then, have really scientific principles been introduced into the study of Reformation history and research on Luther, and if the old dogmatising methods of writing history still refused to go into a well-earned retirement, they nevertheless cannot now do so much harm as before. Among educated people at least they have lost all credit.

Ranke's "History," published in 1839, is among the few historical works which have outlived their authors. Research, however, has naturally not stood still ever since. It has pursued its way indefatigably, and by new forms of organisation and constant improvement of its methods has greatly added to its achievements. In particular, the study of Luther, as of other problems, benefited immensely by the rise of the modern wholesale methods of historical research, the Historical Commissions and Historical Institutes, and the systematic examination of libraries and archives which had never before been possible. This new large-scale organisation made it practicable to venture the attempt, successful for the first time, at a critical edition of Luther's works (Weimar edition, begun in 1883, sixty volumes now published). The systematic searching of libraries and archives, however, brings to light year by year such a vast mass of original material for the study of the reformer that it requires the stomach of an ostrich to take in at once all these freshly broken stones, separate the historically valuable elements, and not feel too much weighed down by the indigestible remainder.

But almost more important still is the fact that, in the course of the last generation, students set themselves new aims and brought within the range of historical consideration phenomena which had hitherto been practically disregarded. Ranke and his pupils had in the main contented themselves with portraying the religious movement and the political events of the Reformation period. Consequently, princes, diplomats and theologians stand in the very foreground of their picture. How the people fared, what the people did and felt, we learn only incidentally. This defect was first clearly recognised by Johannes Janssen. He, in his "History of the German People since the End of the Middle Ages," deliberately chose the people for his hero, and made it his aim to ascertain exactly the economic, social, political, religious and moral conditions of that time, and to determine the changes in these conditions brought about by the Reformation. There was a significant advance, but at first only an advance in the method of setting the problem. For Janssen was not successful in this new task. Why? Because he did not keep closely to it, but allowed it to be constantly thrust aside by a vindicatory thesis, seeking to prove that the fifteenth century was in essentials the springtime of a whole civilisation, and that it was Luther alone who deprived Germany of the rich harvest which this springtime promised. As the earlier scholars were inclined to fall into the error of isolating the leading spirits of an age from their surroundings and elevating them too high above the general mass, they seldom had an eye for the relation existing between Luther and the theologians of the late Middle Ages. Indeed, since A. Ritschl so sharply criticised the exaggerated estimates of the merits of the so-called forerunners of the Reformation, people were inclined to regard Luther's theology as a completely new creation and to deny that the Middle Ages had any deep influence in his development. Denifle was the first to state with vigorous emphasis that there, as elsewhere, there was no definite break in the history of spiritual life. In his "Luther" of 1904 he sought to show in detail the connecting links between Luther and the so-called "modern theologists" of the end of the Middle Ages. But in this case, too, the advance was at first only an advance in the setting of the problem. The problem itself remained unsolved, because Denifle, like Janssen, could not make up his mind to treat it in a purely historical manner, but was always trying to prove at the same time, in the character of Catholic apologist, that Luther was a genuine specimen of the decadent type, and his theology the degenerate product of degenerate scholasticism. Besides these extremely influential investigators, others were eagerly engaged in raking up from among the dead the almost forgotten Catholic adversaries of Luther: Tetzel, Usingen, Eck, Cochlaeus, Emser, Schatzgeyer, Kilian Leib, and the rest. The Protestants meanwhile directed their attention with some favour towards those antagonists of the reformer, too much neglected by all parties, who follow neither the Pope nor the Wittenberger nor the Züricher: Karlstadt and Schwenckfeld, Sebastian Franck and Erasmus of Rotterdam, Thomas Münzer, Hans Denck and other Anabaptists. At the same time, however, they set to work, emulating a vast number of local historians, to study the course of the Reformation in the various districts of Germany. The result was the discovery of a crowd of stars of the second, third, fourth and fifth magnitudes beside the great star Luther, and a very much clearer, more powerful and more realistic view of the course of the Evangelical movement as a whole. It goes without saying that the accepted views of individual groups and phenomena of the Reformation period were thereby profoundly changed. Erasmus of Rotterdam and those of his way of thinking had appeared to Ranke and other older scholars remarkable only as critics of the Catholic system. Now the positive tendencies of their endeavours were also stressed, and students perceived in them the direct ancestors of the movement towards religious enlightenment in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Forty years ago the Anabaptists were generally regarded as bloody, fanatical revolutionaries, and at the same time reactionaries of the most narrow and limited views—in fact, as mere epigones of the dying Middle Ages. It is now agreed that the members of this pious and much-persecuted sect were in the main no revolutionaries, but patient unworldly ascetics like the Quakers of later times ; not merely epigones of the mediaeval Waldensians, Apocalyptics and Mystics, but to some extent followers of the humanistic reform movement, and, above all, opponents of the unintelligent literal belief and the loose morality of vulgarised Lutheranism. Indeed, certain scholars are now inclined to place them, like Erasmus and the Erasmians, higher than Luther and his fellow-reformers, as being the forerunners of new and powerful religious movements—namely, as direct ancestors of the Independents and Pietists. This new appreciation of the Baptists naturally brought with it a new appreciation of those men who, true stepchildren of Fortune, had so long been the stepchildren of research also : Kaspar von Schwenckfeld and Sebastian Franck of Donauwörth. They, too, after being long misunderstood, attained at once to a respect which is in its way a new misunderstanding—Schwenckfeld being taken as the spiritual ancestor of the pietistic ideal of communism, and Franck even as a prophet and forerunner of the religious views of Schleiermacher.

The enrichment, clarification and correction of the general picture of the age, which have been gained by these special studies and new methods of envisaging the problem, in themselves necessitate a revision in many points of the traditional picture of Luther. Still more urgently is this necessitated by the extremely rich finds of the last decades bearing directly on the reformer, and by the many researches connected with them. Often, of course, these are concerned with minutiae the knowledge of which does not make us noticeably wiser or happier. The fact that little Martin was baptised on November 11, 1483, in the tower of the church of St. Peter and St. Paul at Eisleben, probably by Father Bartholomäus Rennebecher; that he was not, as had been generally supposed, the first-born, but had an elder brother; that he probably attended the Cathedral School in Magdeburg and took part in the "collations" (communal lessons) of the Brothers of the Common Life, who among others acted as teachers at the *Domschule*; that the maternal uncle on whose help Luther's parents counted when they sent him to Eisenach was called Konrad Hutter and was verger at the church of St. Nicholas there; that in this "his dear city" not only Kunz Cotta but also Cotta's brother-in-law, Heinrich Schalbe, took a practical interest in him, in return for which he had to take little Kaspar Schalbe to school; that in Erfurt he lived first in the "Biertasche" or St. George's hostel at the Lemannsbrücke, and afterwards for a short time, as a law student, in the Himmelspforte hostel; that when he took part in the chapter meeting of the Augustinian Congregation at Cologne, in 1512, he prayed reverently in the cathedral before the famous reliquary shrine of the three holy kings; that already as a young professor he once lectured on Genesis, and on the Coburg in 1530 wore spectacles and a long beard—all this is certainly quite interesting and useful for the student of Luther to know, but does not require him to submit his conception of the life, deeds and opinions of Doctor Martinus to a thorough revision. Of greater value to him are the little discoveries which give the final blow to certain old and exceptionally slow-dying Luther legends. These include, for instance, the supposition, appearing as early as 1535 in a polemical work of the Catholic Georg Witzel, but widely accepted since 1702 in Protestant circles also, that Luther's father in his younger days had committed manslaughter (*cf.* Appendix C); further, the *Lügende*, the lying legend, first produced in 1568, that the reformer put an end to his life by hanging himself [1]; and, above all, many expressions still frequently quoted as his. I will mention only the two best-known catch-phrases of this kind, the lines: "Who loves not woman, wine and song, Is but a fool his whole life long"; and the "great confession" at Worms: "Here I stand, I can do no other, so help me God! Amen!" [2]

---

[1] Luther passed away quietly on February 18, 1546, as the result of a stroke, at a quarter to three in the morning, in the house of Bürgermeister Drachstedt at Eisleben, not in his bed, but on a leather-covered bench in the sitting-room; *cf.* the reports of the numerous eye-witnesses, among them one Catholic, the apothecary Johann Landau of Eisleben, in J. Strieder's *Authentische Berichte über Luther's letzte Lebensstunden*, Lietzmann's small texts No. 99. The rumour that he hanged himself from the bed-post appeared first in 1568, *cf.* Hondorff, *Promptuarium Exemplorum*, f. 128b. The first literary defence of this lie appeared in 1591, based on the alleged statements of the alleged servant of Luther, in *De Signis Ecclesiae* ii, 154, by the Italian orator Bozio. In 1606 the Franciscan Sedulius even gave a verbal report of this statement (*Praescriptiones adv. Haereses* 208 ff.). He claimed to have received it from a "trustworthy man" in Freiburg (Breisgau), who had obtained it from another anonymous "pious man." The *Lügende* thus employs the evidence of no less than three anonymous persons. On Luther's death *cf.* Appendix E.

[2] According to the earliest reports on the hearing of April 18, based on a record of Luther's own, he concluded his famous short reply to the decisive question set him by the Emperor and the Reich with the exclamation: "So help me God! Amen!" He was accustomed at that time to conclude his sermons similarly: "So help us God!" (Corr. Ed. Enders, 2419). The words: "I can do no other, here stand I," certainly appear as early as 1521 in two versions printed in Wittenberg, but Luther had nothing to do with the printing of these. The words as now quoted appeared first in the second volume of the Wittenberg edition of his works of 1546. This volume was not published until after his death. The famous words are, therefore, not historical; nevertheless they are not historically valueless. For they characterise as succinctly as possible the reformer's attitude and frame of mind in that historic moment: his firm resolve, if it pleased his opponents, to suffer martyrdom for the Truth revealed to him ("here stand I"), his incorruptible fidelity to his convictions, which made it impossible to do anything against his conscience ("I can do no other"), and his unconquerable trust in God, which made him stretch out towards God's hand with calm certainty even in this hour of greatest danger and responsibility ("So help me God"). It would, therefore, hardly be possible even to-day to find a better inscription for the Worms Memorial

But necessary as it still is to fight against these legends, and alluring as the idea would have been to count up and characterise in the jubilee year 1917 the new discoveries in connection with Luther, for the use and benefit of the contemporary world and posterity, yet neither such an exhibition of relics, nor a complete casualty list of the lies and legends gradually silenced under the knife of criticism, would place the reader in a position to realise how Doctor Martinus appears in the light of modern research. This will be more readily attained by acting in accordance with the old saying "The half is more than the whole," and by attempting no more than to determine how far the picture of Luther's personality and spiritual development has undergone essential correction or explanation in its main lines through the new finds and researches. If we go to work in this manner, it becomes clear at once that it is the early days of the reformer and the Reformation which have especially profited by the scientific work of the last ten years. Not only do we now know the thoroughgoing Papist Luther far more exactly than our fathers did—we are also able to state far more exactly how the reformer Luther gradually evolved from the thoroughgoing Papist; for that reason, and because we are better informed concerning the language and customs, views and endeavours of the late Middle Ages, we also understand far better than they did the Luther of the middle and last periods. Finally, in the course of the last generation, the realisation has penetrated that the total contribution of this great life can only be rightly estimated if while considering it we focus carefully on the perspective of world history—that is, if we seek to find out the reformer's influence not only on religion and theology, but on the whole material and spiritual civilisation of the time. This realisation, indeed, did not escape the older students of Luther. But, in the first place, they did not then possess the means of examining thoroughly the problems arising

---

than these legendary words, in which the Protestant world even in the sixteenth century rightly saw the best characterisation of the reformer. On the verse "Who loves not," etc., see Chapter 4.

from it, and in the second place, they were too much inclined, under the influence of vulgarised "enlightenment," to overlook the distinction between the old and the new Protestant culture, and to bring Luther too near to modern times and too far away from the Middle Ages. Even to-day we are still far from a solution of this historical task, for nothing is more difficult than to determine the whole influence, down to its farthest and slightest effects, of a man whose voice has such range as Luther's. Only one biographer of Luther, Arnold Berger, has in principle achieved this new orientation, and he only in principle, for he still owes us his portrait of Luther as a "hero of civilisation." And only one philosophical historian, Ernst Tröltsch, has undertaken the attempt to treat Luther from these new points of view, in a comprehensive history of Protestant culture ; this attempt, however, has only strengthened the impression among professional historians that the time for such a representation has not arrived. But the discovery of new problems is always more important and more meritorious than the discovery of new facts and the solution of individual questions arising from the setting of the new problem. For the former presupposes the broad view and keen perception of historical genius, which is always an exceptional phenomenon ; the latter requires only certain qualities which may be attained, through scientific schooling, by average intellects : knowledge of sources, practical sense, and sure experience of critical methods. But the stone-cutter must do his work before kings can begin to build. Otherwise there arises, instead of a solid building, a mere airy construction which collapses at the first breath of wind. Instead, therefore, of indulging their immoderate lust for building, the philosophers who claim this kingly task for their own, in the realms of history as well as elsewhere, ought rather to spend a few more decades running round with the gangman's stick behind the hewers—the theologians, historians and philologists—to see that they fulfil well and truly their modest functions in the household of Learning, and discover, by working indefatigably at their little tasks, all that "we" do not yet know of modern civilisation. Then, perhaps, in the jubilee year 2017, a new king in the realm of mind will be able, amid the applause of even the incorrigibly correct specialists, who to-day regard every attempt of this kind as a sin against the spirit of science, to venture a " synthetic " representation, and successfully teach a happier posterity what Martin Luther and his work mean, not only to Western Christianity, but to the whole human race.

CHAPTER II

THE EVOLUTION OF THE REFORMER

ANY man who compels his fellow-citizens to take sides for or against the cause he represents must make up his mind to pass his life, henceforth, under the control and criticism of public opinion. Whatever he may do, he can never again be quite sure that some good friend or cunning enemy is not secretly betraying him to his contemporaries and to posterity. Even the most private of his private affairs, his most innocent chance remarks, are shouted abroad from the housetops—perhaps merely to arouse interest in the teller of them. From the time of the Leipzig Disputation onwards Luther experienced so much of this unwelcome curiosity that at last he complained of it angrily in a phrase more vigorous than repeatable. His enemies looked askance at the very ring he wore on his finger—for who could know whether he did not keep the Devil hidden in it? They observed with the closest attention not only his words, but also his gestures, and noted solemnly every mouthful of Malvoisier, every draught of beer, that he was thoughtless enough to take in the presence of others. His friends, on the other hand, began at an early stage to pick up every scrap and snippet of paper that he left about in his study. They wrote down zealously not only his sermons and lectures but, from 1531 onwards, his supper-time conversations; nor did they fail to state exactly when he suffered from headaches or pains in the chest, or was worried by midges, when his mood was grave or gay, angry or playful. Yet all this watching, note-taking, spying and searching would have availed these inquisitive spirits but little had Luther been as impenetrable as Calvin, as completely master of his very gestures and moods as the reserved and prudent Loyola. But he was a true Thuringian, by nature not one to sit mum or walk on tiptoe, nor yet a lover of fine gestures and smooth civilities. He took no anxious thought for his dignity, but spoke his mind freely before his friends and companions over everything that interested and occupied him—even of things that the civilised European of to-day would discuss only in the greatest privacy with his doctor. As early as 1515 he expressed his opinion, without consideration or prudence, upon even the most high and mighty personages, and when he began to feel at home in the pulpit and professorial chair he was never ashamed to speak with complete frankness, if the occasion seemed to require it, upon his own experiences, struggles, errors and imperfections. Nor did he depart from this inborn freedom and frankness when he sat down to write. For he never wrote "books," in the way that professors write them. His productions were never anything but sketches and studies on contemporary questions and disputes—theses, pamphlets, polemics, edifying tracts, sermons, whose limited scope early became a subject of mockery to his opponents ; and in these "pamphlets," too, he spoke out from his heart on everything that occupied him, indifferent to the discussions and misunderstandings that might follow, so that one can tell from his writings what he thought, felt, hated, loved, wished and intended at any given moment. Even his apparently purely erudite works are really "fragments of a great confession," and his works as a whole form a collection of confessions, amounting to seventy volumes, such as hardly any other man of note has left behind him.

Yet, precious as this collection of "confessions" is, it suffers from certain defects which have ever been sorely felt : first, it begins comparatively late, and, secondly, it is extremely unequal as regards both quantity and quality of the information given. For the years between 1505 and 1513 it consists of only four letters of mediocre interest, a receipt and a few marginal notes preserved by chance. For the following six years also there are a good many gaps in the data. And then comes such a flood of information that the new-comer almost sinks in despair, wondering how he shall set to work on this overwhelming mass. Within the last generation, however, so many half or wholly forgotten works and documents have come to light, dealing precisely with those twice seven lean years preceding the Leipzig Disputation, that scholars may now bless those lean years as their fattest years of harvest. In 1877 there was found in a second-hand bookshop in Cologne a student's copy of the Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians, from the year 1516. Ten years later Buchwald discovered in the school library at Zwickau seven old books which the reformer evidently studied as a monk, and which, as was his habit, he had diligently provided with marginal notes. In the same place there appeared in 1885 some unknown early sermons, including the oldest remaining one of all, the sketch of an Easter sermon for the year 1515. A little before this, the preliminary notes for his first Commentary on the Psalms (1513–15) came to light at Dresden, and at the same time the final text of the commentary, carefully prepared by Luther himself, was published in its entirety for the first time. The last years of the century brought yet more surprises. In 1899 Hermann Vopel discovered in the Vatican Library a copy of the reformer's Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, of 1515–16, and a student's version of the Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews, of 1517. Hardly had the erudite world calmed down a little after this event, when it learned, to its great astonishment, that Luther's own original manuscript of the famous Commentary on Romans was lying unnoticed, but well preserved, in the show cases of the Berlin Museum. This surprise, at first more painful than pleasurable to the learned students of libraries, permits us to hope that other lost manuscripts of the reformer's youth are also lying somewhere in Germany or Rome, waiting for their discoverer: his college notes on the Nichomachean Ethics and Dialectics of Aristotle and on the Epistle to Titus; the unfinished Commentary on Aristotle's Physics; and the correspondence with Staupitz, ever sorely missed, for the years 1505 to 1517. But, sweet as it is to linger among such dreams, it would be ungrateful to forget how rich we are already, and how many new things these discoveries, no longer quite new, have to offer.

They enable us to observe the young monk and teacher Luther at close quarters, during weeks, months and years, at work in the silence of his cell. That is the first and most welcome advance which we owe to them. For it is a moral lesson even to see how this man works. How absorbed he is in his subject, how painfully conscientious and exact, even in things of little apparent importance! He writes out in full not only every sermon, but also every lecture, and in some cases, as if that were not virtue enough, afterwards makes a neat and accurate fair copy of his lectures. The books which have come down to us from his library, on the other hand, have a far less attractive appearance. They are a mass of crossings-out, marginal notes and glosses of all kinds; often all the margins are filled with writing. But what would ordinarily be a vexation is here a sight for rejoicing. For what do these aesthetic defects prove? That he did not merely glance through the books he took up, but really *read* them, and that as he read he criticised, and criticised most vigorously.

Thus the outward appearance of the tools of his learned craft in itself shows that Luther as a young teacher possessed many qualities essential to that profession—thoroughness and industry, accuracy and independence of judgment. If next we look more closely at his college notebooks and preparations, we are at once struck by the immense progress the young professor has made, as Dozent and scholar, in the space of a few years. In his first theological exposition of the *Sententiae* of Peter Lombard in 1509–10, he evidently, according to the notes preserved, kept entirely to the beaten track. In the Commentary on the Psalms, too, he takes his arrangement and method from the mediaeval scholastics. But here he makes fruitful use of the Humanists Faber and Reuchlin also; he now considers it necessary to learn Hebrew, and here and there, as far as his scanty resources allow, even refers to the Hebrew text, in so far as he has the printed copy already at his disposal. The Commentary on Romans looks at first sight exactly like any mediaeval course of lectures. But though Luther faithfully follows the exegetic framework of the Middle Ages, and explains the text two and three times quite in the mediaeval style, he has nevertheless practically conquered the exegetic methods of the mediaeval scholars. Therefore, as soon as Erasmus' New Testament comes into his possession, he follows the original Greek text and tries, like Erasmus himself, to elucidate this text philologically with the help of such wretched lexica as he has. But he is not at all inclined to follow Erasmus and the Humanists through thick and thin. He realises clearly that they fall short in what was to him most important of all—that they translate St. Paul rightly, no doubt, but do not understand him rightly.[1] Thus he maintains an attitude of independence towards Erasmus, and, drawing from the depths of his personal experience, solves on his own account, and for the first time, the great problem attempted without success by so many early Christian and mediaeval scholars, and by the Humanists from Marsilio Ficino onwards: he shows what Paul really felt, thought and taught, and so wins back for humanity that great Apostle, so long wooed in vain. Regarded purely from the point of view of scholarship, this commentary is an event hardly equalled in the history of exegesis. The demands of the Humanists are here satisfied, as well as the aims of the older exegetic scholars which laid more stress upon a clear understanding of the substance. But the one-sidedness of both these schools is recognised and overcome, and thus from the scientific point of view they are outdistanced and outclassed.

The young monk's progress as a teacher, in these first years as Dozent, is not less striking than his progress as a scholar. In the exposition of Peter Lombard he seems, even when lecturing, to have employed the usual heavy and formal phraseology of scholasticism. In the Commentary on the Psalms he attempts now and then to make the text more comprehensible to his listeners by images and similes, examples and special applications to contemporary life. But not until the Commentary on Romans does this endeavour so govern the whole presentation that it is possible from his notes to deduce not only the standard of education, but to a certain extent the interests of the Wittenberg students of the better sort. In continual digressions he makes clear the words of the Apostle by striking examples from the present, vivid pictures, fables and anecdotes. Often enough he introduces German proverbs to give more life to the text. But, above all, he "boldly Germanises" the difficult Greek and Latin expressions, to ensure that even the less talented students shall be able to follow him; and so that nobody shall sit out his time in the classroom quite without profit, he makes it a rule to summarise the essentials of his discourse in a brief dictated passage. It is no wonder that such a relatively large number of students' versions of these lectures have been preserved, and that students listened to him "willingly," even with enthusiasm! They enjoyed the rare fortune of learning something quite new from a course of lectures, and this something new was presented to them in a form so clear and comprehensible, so interesting and alive, that even the dullards had only to stretch out their hands to make it their own for ever.

---

[1] It may be true that in the minutiæ of exegesis Luther was inferior to Lyra, Paul of Burgos, Faber, Erasmus, and Melancthon, but this does not alter the fact that he was the first to *understand* St. Paul again.

It is of more importance to us, however, to realise how early the temperament and critical vein of the later years of struggle showed themselves in the reformer. In the earliest manuscript notes that we have, the marginal notes to St. Augustine's works (1508–9), he expresses his enthusiasm for Augustine and his distaste for the prince of mediaeval philosophy, Aristotle, with all the passion of later days. At the same time he begins also to view tradition with a critical eye; for instance, he compares meticulously the writings in the Basel edition of St. Augustine, as regards content and style, and with a happy discernment proves two of them false. In the Commentary on the Psalms he ventures occasionally to criticise the ecclesiastical conditions of his time. But his interest in these things is not yet very great. He is still mainly preoccupied with purely scholastic research and questions of practical religion. It is in the Commentary on Romans that his interest in the events of the world beyond the cloisters becomes appreciably greater. He alludes ever more frequently to contemporary happenings, points out the abuses in the Church and in clerical society with ever greater energy, and gives vent to his displeasure, grief and indignation with increasing freedom, frankness and daring. He does not yet, indeed, attack indulgences as such, but only the excessive number of indulgences and the grasping, merciless methods of those who sold them. He does not reject the practice of fasting in itself, but only compulsory fasting; not the worship of saints, but only the superstitious exaggeration with which it was overgrown. He declares boldly that the canon law needs a thorough purification, that the Church services are full of superfluous ceremonies and doctrines which should be suppressed, and that the number of feast days should be greatly reduced. He maintains that in Rome money can buy dispensations from every obligation, and that the new Rome is even worse than the old. Loudly he bewails the hard-heartedness, violence, luxury and worldliness of the prelates, the vulgarity and ignorance of the parish priests, the arrogance of the monks, the wrongheadedness of preachers of indulgences, the superstitious importance attached to the foundation of Masses, the laziness of the artisans, the egoism, obstinacy and cruelty of the temporal princes, the hollowness, formalism and irreligious attitude of the lawyers. Towards lawyers in general he is almost as bitter as in later years. But still more distasteful to him are the "pig theologers," *i.e.* the scholastics and scholastic philosophers. He has already made up his mind about them so completely that he frankly advises his students to get through their compulsory philosophy course as quickly as possible and then without delay fling themselves into the struggle against philosophy, meaning the philosophy of the scholastics. Nor does he always content himself with these general condemnations: he is not afraid to designate by name certain mighty sinners, such as Pope Julius II, Duke Georg of Saxony, the Bishop of Strassburg, and even his otherwise deeply honoured lord, the Elector Friederich der Wiese; or, if he does not name them, he characterises them so clearly that no attentive hearer can have any doubt whom he means.

Yet all this criticism springs from disillusioned love, never from a desire to find fault. Just as he is honestly devoted to his Prince, so he is attached whole-heartedly to the Church. He loves and honours her still as his mother, and takes it as a matter of course that the priests should be revered in spite of the evil elements in the clergy. He even begs earnestly that, for love of the Church, the faithful shall observe all the outward ceremonies and practices demanded of them. He still thinks so highly of the monastic life that he seeks to convince his hearers: now above all, when the Orders are so much despised, now is the time to become a monk. All the same the last chapters of the Commentary give one the feeling that he is on the point of throwing off the cassock. For though he speaks monkishly enough at times, he no longer turns his gaze solely into himself and on himself, like the true monk. He looks around him, keenly and freely, no longer criticising only himself but criticising the whole world. He does not wish merely to reform himself, as the true monk does, but has already a definite programme of reforms for the Church and for Christian society. So striking is this widening of his spiritual horizon, this change in his mood and, indeed, in his whole outlook on life, that involuntarily one asks: What happened to make the young monk so clear-sighted, so lively of mind, so courageous, and even impudent? Can it be merely the growing familiarity with the double profession of teacher and preacher which had been thrust upon him, and the resulting increase of confidence at the desk and in the pulpit? If so, it is difficult to understand why this natural development expressed itself in a growing opposition to those very authorities which his office required him to respect. The cause must lie deeper. Some profound change must have taken place in his convictions in those first years as Dozent, which gradually made itself felt in his words and actions, so that to us, regarding him from afar, he begins to seem a different man.

If we turn, seeking enlightenment, to the latest Catholic biographer of Luther, Hartmann Grisar, S.J., we find an apparently very simple "psychological" interpretation of the facts described. Luther at first gave outward adherence, we are told, to the strictest group of Observantines, the Augustinian Hermits, and therefore when Staupitz came into conflict with seven monasteries jealous for their rules, Luther was sent by the latter to plead their cause in Rome. But how did he really use his time in Rome? First, to learn Hebrew from the Jew, Jakob; and secondly, to address a petition to the Curia, asking permission to leave his monastery for ten years to study in Italy as a layman. But the Curia rejected this petition. Willy-nilly, Brother Martin had to return to Germany, and there sought to obtain more or less the same end by roundabout ways. First he "deserted to Staupitz"—that is, he suddenly took sides against the seven strict monasteries whose cause he had hitherto upheld so uncompromisingly. Thenceforward he attacked the fervent Observantines from the pulpit and the desk more and more openly and unreservedly, and from 1515 onwards tried all means, as District Vicar, to make the "libertarian party," which was "devoted to him," supreme in the ten or eleven monasteries under his jurisdiction. In the Black Monastery at Wittenberg, where matters were quite in his hands, Luther himself admits, says Grisar, that no proper monastic rule was observed even in 1517, and he himself had long been a monk of "liberal views and practice." These critical utterances in the Commentary on Romans therefore merely reflect the young teacher's progressive alienation from the old faith, with which since 1510, and indeed since the celebration of his first Mass (May 2, 1507), as is shown by his distaste for the ceremony, he had ceased to be genuinely in touch.

This psychological explanation is somewhat surprising. We are entitled to ask, therefore: How does the learned Father know all this? His chief witness is a Lower Saxon chronicler who knew Luther in 1515–16, but only found time to write down his thoughts and recollections at the end of his life, in 1561—Jan Oldekop of Hildesheim. This man, who so hates Doctor Martin that he makes him responsible for all the evils and misfortunes of the age, even the mode of baggy trousers and the increased price of bread, butter, cheese and eggs, is the only one among Luther's countless enemies and opponents who tells this pretty story of Jakob the Jew and the petition to the Holy See; and unfortunately he is no impartial historian. It is obvious that he accepts all the tales he was told in Rome with touching credulity, and, worse still, he sometimes shamelessly exceeds the truth. Like some honest old seaman, he relates as personal experiences, perfectly solemnly and without a quiver of the eyebrow, things which he cannot possibly have experienced, because they never happened. From this it follows that his word must only be accepted in so far as other authorities confirm his statements. When this is not the case, when he is in contradiction to the reliable historians even of his own party, such as Cochlaeus, we must always bear in mind the possibility that he is rambling or lying a little. So this witness is worthless. Nor can the learned Father make any better show with his other proofs. His treatment of Luther is somewhat reminiscent of the way in which an ambitious young barrister, studying to become Public Prosecutor, examines the prisoners brought before him. He does not listen with any great attention to what the accused really says; he ignores many of the most important statements, and at every point hears only what he wishes to hear. Let us try to avoid these little mistakes and to determine what the reformer and the other trustworthy authorities really say, and what kind of picture of Luther's development results.

First of all, there was in fact a dispute in the Augustinian Congregation to which Luther belonged. The cause of this dispute was the attempt of Staupitz, the Vicar-General, to incorporate into the Congregation twenty-five Augustinian monasteries which had not reformed their constitutions. It was, of course, his aim gradually to reform these monasteries. As the General of the Augustine Order also approved the plan in 1510, everything appeared to be going well. Then, just at the crucial moment, seven of the thirty-one priories of the Congregation raised objection to the union, among them the great and influential convents of Erfurt and Nuremberg. As to the wisdom of this opposition we may be permitted to doubt. Be it as it may, these seven monasteries considered the observance of their Rule to be jeopardised and therefore sent two Brothers to Rome towards the end of 1510, there to enunciate their protest in the right quarters, as the statutes of the Order expressly permitted. One of these Brothers was the Erfurt monk, Martin Luther. He, however, was hardly fitted to play an active part in such a mission. In the first place he was far too young, and in the second place he had no knowledge of Roman diplomacy, upon which everything depended. In Rome, as was to be expected, the petition was rejected. The Procurator of the Order did not even grant permission to appeal to the Curia, in which he was quite justified. Nevertheless, his four weeks' stay in the Eternal City was not without its fruit and profit to the monk Luther. In the first place he made a general confession there, though he had already performed this twice in Erfurt. Besides this, he undertook the pilgrimage to the seven great Churches, a pilgrimage which was extremely laborious, and occupied a whole day, but conferred in return the most generous of indulgences. Lastly, he climbed the sacred steps of the Lateran, in the prescribed manner, praying and on his knees, and like a "mad saint" visited all the churches and catacombs in which any miraculous image or miraculous relic was to be seen, and some great or small indulgence to be obtained. This was the programme of many visitors to Rome. But apart from this he undertook and experienced nothing noteworthy. He did, indeed, like all pilgrims, see and hear something of the iniquitous Rome of his own day, but these impressions were not strong enough to blot out the memory of the sacred Rome of the Apostles and martyrs or to shatter his faith in the glory of the Catholic Church.

Meanwhile the General of the Order had taken steps to settle the dispute in the German Congregation. Staupitz made no difficulty in co-operating with this attempt. Towards the end of July 1511, at a conference with the priors of the seven dissentient monasteries, he declared himself ready to renounce the most important point of his project, the union of the twenty-five new convents with the thirty-one old Observantine monasteries in one Chapter. This did not meet with the success hoped for. Only a few of the dissentient monks, Luther among them, expressed themselves satisfied and went over to Staupitz' side. Thereupon what did the latter do ? At the meeting of the Chapter in Cologne in May 1512, he simply let the whole plan drop. In return, probably, the Nuremberg monastery undertook to pay the very considerable expenses of the contest. With that, the dispute was over and done with. It is surely quite plain that the whole controversy was concerned not with principles of conventual discipline, but with a purely practical, or even political question. A difference of opinion on such a matter was quite compatible with perfect agreement as to fundamental monastic principles. Did Luther, it may be asked, turn this constitutional problem into a matter of principle ? He did not. Certainly, however, the negotiations in the summer of 1511 had most important personal consequences for him. For having advised peace in Erfurt he was looked upon as a black sheep, and in all probability treated very badly by his fellow-monks. Staupitz therefore recalled him to Wittenberg late in the summer of 1511, and in October 1512, at Staupitz' suggestion, he occupied the Chair of Biblical Literature formerly held by the Vicar-General himself. This was undoubtedly the most important result of the whole dispute, for Luther and for humanity. It meant that Wittenberg became the forum and Electoral Saxony the birthplace of the Reformation. This circumstance, with all its far-reaching consequences both for Saxony and for the Reformation, is due indirectly to an incident which none of those involved thought important enough to merit even a passing mention.

At that time, however, Luther the Reformer did not exist, but only Luther the Professor; and Luther the Professor did at first simply what all theological professors have always done: he delivered lectures, and also occasionally sermons of a very professorial type. Twice in the course of those lectures, which were attended by many young Augustinian monks, he incidentally criticises the conduct of the dissentient priories towards Staupitz in the late controversy; he also criticises *incidentally* certain abuses in monastic life, current not only among the Augustinians but in all Orders; lastly, he once raises objections to the unwarrantable privileges of the begging Orders. The same objections were made, and rightly, by good Catholics, and were indeed brought forward at that very time by the Spanish and Italian bishops in the Lateran Council. All these are simply attacks and criticisms upon existing evils; there is never any fundamental opposition to the Community of which he is a member. His fellow-monks realised this very well. They saw in this criticism nothing more than "holy zeal for the Lord's house," and therefore elected him in May 1516, just after one of these outspoken sermons, as District Vicar, at the Chapter meeting at Gotha. Did he perhaps after that meeting, as Vicar, seek to give paramount influence in the monasteries under his authority to the "libertarian party devoted to him?" The answer is, that there was no libertarian party devoted to him. What we know of his activities as Vicar, and we know a good deal, proves only that he endeavoured to maintain or restore order in the monasteries, according to the provisions of their Statutes. Why, then, did he not begin with Wittenberg itself, where "as he himself admits," no real monastic rule existed at the beginning of 1517? But does he really admit that? Not at all! What the inquisitors of to-day call disorder was, in every monastery of the province except Erfurt, *traditional order*: the monks did not sing the High Mass or the Breviary, but simply recited them *recto tono*, and on occasion they executed several prayers together, so that they might have the necessary time for the things more important to them, such as preaching, study and the care of souls. For those are the "rites and ordinances" referred to in that already famous confession. Nothing then remains of the "monk of liberal views and practice," except the reformer's complaint in October 1516 that he seldom found time to recite the Canonical Hours or to celebrate Mass. Modern "psychological" students of Luther have at once, "with calculating tactics" (to use one of their favourite expressions), quite wrongly turned this complaint into an accusation that he was constantly neglecting his Hours and the Mass! There remains also the fact that the reformer, after the outbreak of the open struggle on October 1, 1517, sometimes passed a week, even two or three weeks, without reading his Breviary; and then, one Saturday, he would shut himself up for three days, eating and drinking nothing, to make up his arrears in one sitting!

It must be regretfully admitted then, that Father Grisar's psychological explanation does not lead us aright. Let us turn to another interpreter of Luther's soul, who perhaps knows more about its depths and shallows than the learned Jesuit, since he was, after all, its closest companion—namely Martin Luther himself. He never, as we know, kept his heart secret as a murderer's den. It is not likely, therefore, that he preserved a fearful silence concerning the state of mind through which he passed while he was yet in the Babylonish captivity of "Popery." Far from it, indeed! He related often and willingly how he first came to enter the monastery, and how at last he came to leave it again. Once, indeed, at the end of his life, in the historical preface to Volume I of his collected works (edition of March 5, 1545), he starts out to write a regular biography. In form, the attempt is certainly not altogether successful. Like many old people, he is inclined to wander from one thing to another. He begins, just as the custom is now, with the nailing up of the Theses on October 31, 1517, and narrates all the subsequent events, *deinceps secundum ordinem*, up to the Leipzig Disputation in July 1519. When he has come so far quite happily, it suddenly strikes him that he has not yet said a word about the celebrated Golden Rose and the still more celebrated Miltitz affair. Immediately he goes back to these questions, discusses them at length, and then continues in a leisurely style: "In that same year 1519 I undertook a second exposition of the Psalms, confident that I was now better fitted (than the first time), having meanwhile lectured on the Epistles of St. Paul to the Romans and Galatians and that to the Hebrews." But hardly has he written the word "Romans" than he realises anew how much he owes to that Epistle; at once he slips back a few years and writes a whole page on his first and decisive encounter with it. Not until ten sentences later does he take up the thread of his story again with the words: "Better prepared by these thoughts, I began to comment on the Psalms for the second time"; and with one single sentence on the Diet of Worms he comes to a hasty conclusion. Nobody who has lived much with old people will feel any surprise at the old reformer's somewhat incoherent narrative; nor will he be shocked to see that the old man puts the most interesting and important thing into a kind of incidental digression.

This most interesting and important piece of his tale is, of course, the ten sentences on his first encounter with St. Paul. He tells us that he had felt a strange longing to know and understand the Apostle. One thing, however, had always frightened him away: the phrase "righteousness of God," in chap. i., verse 17, of the Epistle to the Romans. For he had been accustomed to interpret this concept in the manner of the philosophers, as signifying justice in the distribution of punishments and rewards. From that he had concluded that God, in the New Testament as in the Old, revealed Himself only as the angry, unmerciful Judge; and this vengeful, law-court God, who had already plunged mankind into all kinds of misery through the Old Testament law, Luther uncompromisingly hated. Then at last it occurred to him, after days and nights of meditation, to connect these words with the following sentence: "For the just shall live by faith." And on a sudden it became clear to him what the Apostle meant: not the righteousness which distributes punishment and reward, but that which by grace bestows absolution; that was the "righteousness of God." Then it was as if the gates of Paradise had opened wide before him. A little time after, he read the *De Litera et Spiritu* of Augustine, and found there an interpretation of that phrase which had been to him as the gates of Paradise, not indeed quite the same, but very similar to his own. This is what the reformer tells us, in the autobiography he began in his old age; and in several earlier writings he tells the same story, sometimes with interesting additions. In one of his sermons he remarks: "When I became a Doctor (18th or 19th October 1512), I did not yet know the Light"; and this agrees in substance with a sentence from his "Table Talk": "In this tower, in the Black Monastery at Wittenberg, the Holy Ghost imparted to me this understanding."[1]

---

[1] Conversation of the period June 12 to July 12, 1532, handed down by four witnesses: (1) Schlaginhaufen, *cf. Table Talk* No. 1681: "This knowledge the Holy Ghost imparted to me in this *cloaca*" (in the generally better text of Rörer, *Werke*, Weimar ed., ii, 177, *Table Talk*, No. 1681, *in horto* is written over *cloaca*). (2) Kummer, *ibid.*, No. 3232 b: as above. (3) Cordatus, *ibid.*, 3232 a: "This knowledge the Holy Ghost gave me on this tower." Previously it is stated that the *locus secretus monachorum* was in this tower. (4) Lauterbach, *ibid.*, No. 3232 c: "The Scripture was revealed to me by the Holy Ghost in this tower." A previous passage runs: "When in this tower and *hypocaustum*" (= room, *cf. ibid.*, No. 3593 on the *vaporarium*, 2540 a and b. Letters, ed. De Wette, 5791). The speech has been recorded so variously that the original words cannot now be ascertained. Further regrettable facts are that the text reads differently in the different versions of Schlaginhaufen's collection, and that Schlaginhaufen, as occasionally happened with all the companions, in this case, did not hear quite accurately: in both versions, the beginning of the speech reads: "*haec vocabula justus et misericordia.*" The right version must, however, be "*justitia.*" We are thus at present unable to determine what Luther really said. It is certain, however, that in some way he thought of the *cloaca*. A visit to the place throws no further light. For the square tower which is always meant, and which is clearly distinguishable in the old prints of Wittenberg, has long disappeared, *cf.* H. Stein

Can we, however, without more ado, accept these statements in good faith ? From the marginal notes which the young Erfurt monk wrote in a copy of Peter Lombard in 1509 and 1510, we see that he had already studied Romans i. 17. He had even begun a commentary upon it, in which he interpreted the words " righteousness of God " not quite rightly, but at least not so falsely and " philosophically " as, according to his own account, he still did in 1512. This commentary is not indeed primarily concerned with that phrase, but with the following one, " from faith to faith." We must suppose, therefore, that, as often happens when one is looking up a particular passage in a big book, as if in a dictionary, he read past the preceding expression without realising its full significance. There is another observation which is, at least at first sight, more serious : in the preface referred to, he seems to declare that *all* commentators, with the exception of Augustine, had interpreted " righteousness of God," in Romans i. 17, " philosophically." In fact, in his lecture on Genesis in 1511–12, he makes that express statement. It is true that he did not himself transcribe and publish this lecture. The piece in question was not published until long after his death, from the not altogether legible version of one of his listeners, and it is a proven fact that his editors took the liberty of inserting all kinds of additions on their own account, even in works published during his lifetime. Nevertheless, he must have said something to that effect, or how does Melancthon come to make precisely the same statement in his famous " Life of Luther " of June 1, 1546 ? Let us then accept the remark as authentic. What does it prove ? Simply that he made a mistake. For what he says there about the interpretation of the Epistle to the Romans is demonstrably false. But is not " mistake " perhaps too mild a word ? If we read Luther's later

---

Geschichte des Lutherhauses (Wittenberg, 1883), pp. 23, 27. The same event is dealt with in *Table Talk*, No. 4007 (Lauterbach) of Sept. 12, 1538 : Mathesius, *Table Talk*, ed. Kroker, No. 392, of Sept. 2–13, 1540 ; *ibid.*, No. 585, 607 b (winter 1542–3) ; *Werke*, Weimar ed., xliii, 537 (Genesis) *circa* 1541–2 ; *ibid.*, xliv, 485 f. (Genesis), *circa* 1543 ; the above-mentioned Preface of March 5th, 1545.

accounts and judgments on his life in the monastery, we might easily be led to believe that he never knew an hour of heart's ease and content while he wore the cassock. Yet elsewhere he relates that, at the celebration of his first Mass on May 2, 1507, he praised the monastic life to the Reverend Father as an ineffably peaceful and godlike existence, and that, like a proud saint, he spent hours of mystical exaltation in which he seemed to be among the choirs of the angels. Is this not an intolerable contradiction? No, it is not quite that: it is a new proof of the old psychological experience that with men of full blood the memory of the struggles, fears, miseries and disillusionments they have suffered is far stronger than the memory of the good hours which are never entirely lacking even in the most wretched and distressful existence. But, apart from this, everything is not quite in order, especially in the verbal narratives which he serves up in later years as an extra dish for his fellows at the supper-table in the Black Monastery. There are errors in the dates, sometimes also in the facts. Certainly one must again be careful not to draw far-reaching conclusions from trivial contradictions. If, for instance, he gives the date of his birth variously as 1483 and 1484; and his birthplace once as Eisleben and another time as Mansfeld—this shows only that, like so many people of his time, he was not altogether sure on these points. For even the person who should have known most of the matter, his worthy mother, had, as we can prove, completely forgotten the year of her son's birth, though she knew the day and the hour. Still these little inconsistencies make it our duty to examine his recollections and statements carefully, and never let them pass without scrutiny and investigation. The question arises, however, whether that is enough. Many scholars reply that it is not: that if Luther makes mistakes, he is not a trustworthy authority, and there is an end to it. All those tales of his life as a monk and a "Papist" are a legend, originating only in the 'thirties of the sixteenth century; or, to be exact, a lie, a lie with a purpose, a romance devised with calculating tactics to heighten the splendour of his own person and the turpitude of the Catholic Orders. This is certainly a very simple "psychological" interpretation of the facts; but is it necessary, probable, or even possible? It would be possible, if Luther had in other cases lied like a hysterical woman without sense or aim. For it is impossible to see what aim or purpose could here be served by this "lie," which was related many times perfectly consistently and which in any case was not, in the usual sense of the word, particularly interesting. It would be possible, again, if in fact, as Denifle states, the reformer had only begun to speak of his past struggles, doubts and fears of conscience about 1530. But is that the case? As early as 1515, years before his breach with the old Church, Luther, the monk, tells his listeners in the classroom of struggles, doubts and uneasiness of conscience which, happily, he has now mastered! As early as 1516 he states that once he knew nothing of the "righteousness of God," but that now he has realised, if not without inward struggle, what the Holy Scripture meant by that phrase. Almost at the same time he declares that it makes him absolutely "sea-sick" to hear the word "righteousness" used in the sense of inflexible justice. What does this show? It shows that the so-called legend of his monastic life said to have been invented by Luther in his old age was the same version he gave while yet a monk. True, he does not yet talk of chastisements, vigils, fasting and the endurance of cold. But his cell at Erfurt speaks all the more eloquently in his stead. There was no means of heating this cell, so that he must indeed have "frozen," as he declares later. His earliest portrait dates only from 1520, but he looks there just as Mosellan describes him in 1519: limp and sickly, hollow-eyed, hollow-cheeked, dried-up, nothing but skin and bones. It is evident, then, that he went hungry too, and practised other methods of mortification by "vigils, prayers and other works." For a robust and healthy man of thirty-six—his age at that time—*cannot* look so cadaverous if he gives any care to his body. As soon as Luther relaxed the severity of his life, his face became visibly different. The next portrait, dating from the spring of 1521, shows a change already. The hollow cheeks and eye sockets have filled out, the fleshless neck has become round and firm, and already there is a hint of a double chin; one might almost think that the world-shy ascetic had become a well-endowed prelate. Yet, it may be asked, are not those errors, oversights and exaggerations so accusing that we should do well to ignore the accounts he gives in later life? In that case practically all memoirs and autobiographies, and indeed all the reminiscences of old people, must be suppressed as worthless chatter. For Luther's case is that of all famous writers of memoirs who have had no contemporary documents and accounts to aid them. Goethe, in *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, not only arranges the facts on occasion most arbitrarily, but also commits the gravest errors in chronology, especially as regards the date of origin of his works; yet undoubtedly on those points he meant to offer not poetry but truth. Bismarck notoriously insinuates among his "Thoughts and Recollections" many false recollections and untrue thoughts, yet it occurs to nobody to declare him a liar in consequence, or disregard his writings as an historical source. The same applies to all memoirs of modern times, whoever their authors may be. None of them is free from "errors and omissions," but they are yet indubitably historical sources which no historian can leave unread. No psychologist will be surprised at the mistakes and contradictions in chronology and in substance which exist in the memoirs of the ageing reformer. He will rather wonder that the old man's errors are not more frequent, for he had no diaries and year-books at his disposal, as Goethe had, no ordered collection of materials and well-informed collaborators, as Bismarck had; most important of all, his narrations are always merely incidental, and usually oral; they are made without any long preparation beforehand or any careful examination of his memories, but simply upon the impulse of the moment.

But can all the mistakes, all the obviously exaggerated and unfair judgments which Luther lets fall upon "Popery" —that is, upon the Catholic Church in all its manifestations

—be explained in this way? He tells us, as is well known, that as a child he knew nothing of God's mercifulness, and that Christ was to him only the wrathful Judge upon the rainbow. Even at the monastery he so hated Christ that he felt a pang of fear whenever he saw a picture or image of Him, or even heard His Name spoken. Indeed, it was at the monastery, he says, that he underwent his severest doubts of God's mercy, and these he imputes not only to our foolish nature, but also to the Pope's theology. Is this the truth? If we read the beautiful prayers and hymns which Denifle quotes from the Breviary and Missal of the Augustinian Hermits, we are at first tempted to reply: No. For in these prayers and hymns we meet everywhere not the angry Judge, but that gracious and merciful God of whom Luther, according to his own account, knew nothing. As it is certain that he was familiar with these books at that time, and indeed knew the greater part of them by heart, it seems impossible not to conclude that all he relates in after years concerning his doubts of God's mercy is pure falsehood. He could not have endured such inward strife and suffering, for every day, almost every hour, he heard "grace" sung and spoken of in the most impressive way.

And indeed, had Luther done nothing as a monk but sing and pray, read Mass and hear Mass, this conclusion would be not only permissible but inevitable; we should then need only to open the Augustinian Breviary and Missal to determine what at that time Luther believed, hoped and feared. But we know very well that he did, and was obliged to do, many other things besides. Even as a novice he read and became familiar with the Bible, and a few mystical and theological writers, as well as the Missal and Breviary. But above all he had to impress upon his mind the Constitutions of the Order, and accustom himself to the mighty task which they set before the monk, a task which at first must be begun afresh every day: that of annihilating the old Ego and becoming a superman in the sense of the monastic ideal; that is, a man free of all self-love, whose heart and will are devoted to God alone. This task demanded all the force of will and action. It necessitated not only the subjection of his entire outward and inward life to the control and discipline of the Master of Novices, with self-chastisement and all the visible exercises of humility and obedience; it compelled him also to observe himself incessantly, to register conscientiously every sin of thought, and with all his might to "martyr and torment" his soul, train it and educate it, so that gradually it mastered the high art of loving nothing, desiring nothing but God alone. After he had made his profession, in September 1506, Luther was at once faced with another task deeply stirring to his soul: the duty of preparing himself for consecration as a priest. And hardly had he studied, "with a bleeding heart," Gabriel Biel's book upon the canon, which was prescribed for that purpose, and received ordination (April 3, 1507), when another labour, of quite a new kind, was laid upon him by the Superiors: he must go back to the schoolroom as a "scholarius," and study the masters of "modern theology," Occam, D'Ailly, Biel, under the teachers of the Order, Paltz and Nathin. In this he showed such energy and success that in the autumn of 1508 he was given the functions of Dozent or *Sententiarius*. Then, of course, his time was even more taken up with study; for, as is always the case, teaching at first compelled him to learn with more industry than ever before.

From all this it is clear enough that in those decisive years his spirit was busied with many things besides praying and singing in the choir. Quite naturally he was more absorbed, from his very first day in the monastery, with the great fundamental question of his new status: how to obliterate completely the inborn instinct of self-love, and attain perfect love towards God; more absorbed, too, with all the problems which recurred again and again in his studies. For these problems were closely connected with the practical question, and continually exacted of him the closest and most earnest reflection, while he came to regard the daily prayers and reading of the Breviary more and more as "donkey-work," a mere "toning, twangling, muttering and bleating at the walls," which made a man's head feel like wood. If, therefore, we would discover what were Luther's inner preoccupations during those first years at the monastery, we must not turn to the hymns and prayers which he read and recited, year in and year out, with all his fellow-monks; we must endeavour rather to realise the lofty and exacting ideal upon which he strove to form his outer and inner life, and study the great theologians whom at that time he followed so completely that he read even the Bible with their eyes: Occam and D'Ailly, Gerson and Biel, St. Bernard and Bonaventura, Johannes Mauburnus and Gerhard of Zutphen. Only then shall we be able to determine whether in reality he went through such violent strife and conflict as even in 1515 he affirms.

At the University the young monk had been taught only by Occamists and philosophers of the "modern" tendency; and hence he was already firmly convinced when he first entered the monastery that man can do everything that he wills. He can, for instance, fulfil the Ten Commandments to the very letter, love God with all his heart and with all his soul and with all his might, force his reason to believe white is black, and produce all conceivable suppositions, feelings, sentiments, moral and immoral affections in his mind, by merely *willing* them, and he can achieve this at any time without let or hindrance. For will is the all-determining force in the life of the soul, and therefore is itself conditioned by nothing, not weakened or strengthened, increased or lessened, by any deed or misdeed whatsoever. It remains always constant in quantity and quality, and, like the magnetic needle, returns unfailingly to the position of stable equilibrium which is its characteristic, however often it may be deflected in the direction of good or evil.

This entirely mythical conception of the nature and power of the will was at first strengthened in Luther when he entered the monastery. Here, too, he heard only Occamists speak, and soon himself studied the great masters of the school, Occam, D'Ailly, Gerson, Biel. Furthermore, all that the Occamists declared possible in theory, perfect observance of the Ten Commandments, including love of God, was now immediately required of him in practice; and, lastly, he found the same outlook confirmed by ascetic writers whom he studied as a novice. For, often as they spoke of "grace," none of these authors had any doubt that man, through prayer, meditation and self-denial, can himself fit his soul for union with God, and none neglected to exhort the reader earnestly to the highest exertions of the will. The greatest of them, indeed, Bernard of Clairvaux, declared that it was possible, by careful control and regulation of the mental processes, to ennoble the baser impulse of natural egoism into the lofty affection of pure love towards God; and in his book on the love of God he described the exact method to be followed in so doing. But what perhaps made the deepest impression of all upon the young monk was the fact that in the confessional also, these same beliefs were presented to him. For the doctrine of the Erfurt Augustinians was that of Gabriel Biel, who, though not a strict Occamist, was regarded by them and all the "moderns" as the perfect theologian: they held that a man obtains absolution from the penalty or the guilt of eternal sin only if he sincerely hates and abominates evil. Whoever thinks, therefore, that he has only to confess, expressing some fear of Hell and Purgatory, and receive absolution from the confessor, is mightily mistaken. The so-called "gallows repentance," or remorse for the evil *outward* consequences of sin, can never bring about a change of heart in God, nor can confession and the priestly absolution have any such effect. For though confession and absolution are beneficial and necessary, it must be remembered that the priest remits only the punishments of the Church and a part of the penalties of temporal sin, never that of eternal guilt. But is it not asking the impossible of man, to require him of his own strength to attain perfect contrition? Not at all! He has only to submit his inner life to the process of ennoblement devised by St. Bernard, and thereby gradually transform the natural self-love manifested in the fear of punishment and "gallows repentance" into stainless love of God. Love of God is always accompanied by the just hatred of evil, and thus the necessary requirements for perfect repentance are won by the efforts of the sinner himself.

Thus the young monk was vigorously urged by all he did and heard to martyr and torment his soul, to train it as usually only the body is trained, that it might become capable of perfect love towards God. If he would be saved from Hell and Purgatory, if he would be freed from all uneasiness of conscience, if he would be a true monk, the first condition was ever: "Love God above all things," and to this condition was joined the alluring promise: "You *can* do it, if only you *will*." But could he in reality achieve all that he willed, could he even in every case even *will* all that he wished and required of himself, will it earnestly and with all his might? For this was the sole conception of God which he had learned at the University, and of which he read and heard in the monastery from his Occamist teachers: God is in his inmost Being, as man is —Will. God is absolute, eternal, omnipotent will, and as even human will can be modified by nothing and therefore governs the whole life of the soul, so God is in the highest sense the Will which determines all things and is determined and limited only by Itself—that is, ultimately, arbitrary and irresponsible Might, eternal and omnipotent. This shows itself clearly in His action as Creator: out of sheer irresponsible might did He bring this world into being rather than another; and now He rules it like any absolute monarch, bound only by Himself to the "constitution," the so-called natural laws, granted by His own good pleasure. It shows itself, too, in His dealings as Lawgiver: out of sheer arbitrary might has He declared one action good or meritorious, another evil or punishable. For nothing is in itself good or bad. God could therefore at any time declare as good to-day what was evil yesterday, and punish as a vice to-morrow what to-day he rewards as a virtue. But most glaringly of all does this personification of arbitrary violence manifest itself in God's conduct as Saviour: no rational consideration, but irresponsible might, determined Him to accomplish the Redemption through a divine man rather than a divine stone or a divine beast, to predestinate one section of humanity to blessedness and another to damnation, and even then make salvation dependent upon the fulfilment of certain conditions. It is completely arbitrary that He should consider salvation necessary at all, and still more so that He should have connected this salvation with the sacramental functions of the Church.

If anything is certain and secure, it is the fact that man by his own reason and strength can perform all that God demands of him. Even the greatest and hardest thing of all, pure and disinterested love of God, is not too hard. Nevertheless, every man needs salvation, not from any inward cause but for a purely external reason. It has pleased God in His irresponsible might to regard only those actions as good which He has stamped with the "spiritual ornament" of "grace," thus transforming mere good actions (*merita de congruo*) into meritorious actions (*merita de condigno*), and it has further pleased Him to place this stamp upon them only through the sacraments of the Church. Not that the Church is capable of directly effecting this application of grace by its sacraments. That is God's own function. But He has so arranged that the bestowal of grace takes place always at the same time as the ecclesiastical ceremony. So, although a man can of his own power carry out all God requires of him, he yet needs "grace" and the Church, not that he may become a different being, but in order to obtain recognition from the despot "God." Still, this recognition is not difficult to gain; if a man does what in him lies, God will not fail to bestow on his works the character of merits and thus make them legal tender in the Kingdom of Heaven. Not that he can force God to do any such thing. But the Master of the World has bound Himself by a contract on this point, and, as He is truthful and immutable, He can be counted upon to fulfil the bargain conscientiously.

This was the God whom Luther had before his eyes, whom it was his wish and duty to love, whom, indeed, as he believed, he *must* love, if he would win forgiveness of sins, salvation and eternal blessedness. If we reflect upon this we can feel with him all that he relates, from 1515 onwards, of his inward struggles. It becomes easy to realise, first, that he feared and even hated God, and that he tortured himself so terribly over the question of "Providence," *i.e.* predestination; for he had in mind Occam's God, the God of absolute, arbitrary omnipotence, dealing out salvation and damnation as it seemed good to Him. It is easy to understand, further, that he tormented himself endlessly "to do enough to find a gracious God," and that sometimes, like a mad, arrogant, would-be saint, he believed he had fulfilled what was laid upon him. For he knew no other faith than that man must and could earn grace by his own efforts. It becomes comprehensible, too, that the promises of grace in the Bible and the Liturgy did not make upon him the impression they should, sweet and consoling as they might sound in his ears. For "grace" meant to him primarily the "spiritual ornament," through which alone God gave good works the character of merits, and he was firmly convinced that this "spiritual ornament" must also be deserved and earned. We understand also why he never could or would cease to distress himself over his sins; for conscientious self-examination never revealed in him all the humility and all the love for God required by Biel, St. Bernard and the other masters of monasticism. Lastly, it becomes quite plain why the priestly absolution in the sacrament of penance failed so entirely to bring him comfort. For he had learnt from Biel that absolution in itself did not bestow forgiveness of sins, without the true repentance which arises from perfect love of God. It is no exaggeration, therefore, to say that it was "modern" theology, Biel's doctrine of penance and the monastic doctrine of the kingly path of humility and love, which first plunged him into the fearful doubts and anguish of conscience which in later years he describes so often, and always in such vivid and striking terms.

If that is so, how did it come about that "modern" theology had such a strong and peculiar effect upon him alone, that he alone was so powerfully shaken by Biel's doctrine of penance and the old monastic doctrine of humility, that he alone was so racked by the consciousness of sin? Other monks who pursued exactly the same studies, and applied themselves to exactly the same exercises, were not so affected. Is it not easy to suppose that Luther's nerves were not altogether in order, when even such an experienced guide of souls as Johann von Staupitz did not rightly understand his "temptations," and openly declared his fear of sin to be abnormal? "Normal," indeed, his condition was not, and it may well be that his nerves were strained by hard study, fasts, vigils, and life in his unwarmed cell. But is it permissible to conclude at once from this supposition that his distress of soul was no more than the symptom of a mental disorder brought on by the unaccustomed physical and psychological strain of monastic life? That would be shooting far beyond the mark. The psychological "abnormality" which was the cause of all these anxieties did not first express itself at the monastery. It can be proved that he suffered from it even as a young Magister; and he never threw it off all his life long, though he was in other respects a man of most robust constitution, both physical and mental. For in what did this abnormality consist? Simply in a particularly delicate and sensitive conscience and unusually keen and lively sense of truth. In this tender conscience, and this severe, relentless truthfulness in the judgment of his own self, lies the real origin of his inward sufferings. The old monkish lesson of humility, Biel's doctrine of penance, the hard, cruel picture of God and the fantastic picture of man drawn by "modern theology," all these are to be regarded merely as the occasion and outside impulse which set this strongest and most sensitive nerve of his being in motion, and kept it for so long in a state of quivering excitement and irritability. For had he not been gifted with this exceptional delicacy of feeling, then Biel, Occam and the old monastic pedagogues would assuredly have moved him no more than they did his coarser-fibred companions. Then, also, he would have become a worthy average man like them, and every trace of his life on this earth would long ago have been effaced. For that sensitive conscience which caused him so much unrest was at the same time, like the unrest of a clock, the living force which drove him onwards, impelled him more and more away from the beaten track of the old faith, and with increasing insistence forced him to give to the religious problem that entirely personal turn through which, unconsciously, he was already getting beyond the limits of the Catholic system: "How can *I*, as an *individual*, be assured of the forgiveness of sins and thus of the mercy of God?"

What Luther tells us of his psychological conflicts is further confirmed, indirectly, by the books which he studied at the monastery. To realise this, we have only to take Denifle and Grisar at their word, and read those books with the eyes of a psychologist, trying all the time to imagine what impression they would make upon the grave, meditative, intensely scrupulous young monk, who, in the uneasiness of his heart, thrice made a General Confession, and sometimes confessed twice a day. But obviously this does not prove the correctness of the reformer's statements as to the exact moment and turning-point of this severe inward crisis—his experience in the tower of the Black Monastery. In any case we should do well here also to go over the original documentary evidence—that is, to study more closely the manuscripts dating from the epoch in which he himself places the crisis: from the late autumn of 1512[1] to March 1515 (reading of Augustine's *De Litera et Spiritu*). The principal documents in question are the preparatory notes for his first Commentary on the Psalms, dating from July or August 1513 to March 1515. What do we learn from these sources? First, that he must have been thoroughly acquainted with the Epistle to the Romans as early as the summer of 1513; for he quotes it at every opportunity, even in the marginal notes to Faber's

---

[1] *Werke* (Weimar ed.), lxv, p. 86.

Commentary, which he uses for the Psalms: secondly, that he already understood the Epistle; and thirdly, that the critical moment in his inner development lay then some time behind him. For we find here, though often obscurely and inconsistently expressed, all the principal elements which later made him a heretic: the conviction that the greatest evil is sin, the greatest good the remission of sin; the realisation that man cannot himself compel or earn peace of conscience, which can become his only if God inspires him with confidence in His mercy; and, lastly, the certainty that with this confidence, or *faith*, God also gives men the strength to do good. These old notebooks give evidence, too, that Romans i. 17 must have had a very special significance for the young professor. Whenever he discusses the concept of the righteousness of God, he never fails to develop, with much emphasis, the religious thoughts which have already come to him through a true understanding of that concept. In other words, we have in those notebooks documentary proof that Romans i. 17 was indeed the gate of Paradise to Luther, and that the illumination of which he speaks later did indeed take place in the period to which he attributes it, at the end of 1512 or the beginning of 1513—in the first months, that is, after his advancement to the professorate in the theological faculty at Wittenberg.

But let us beware of interpreting this fact wrongly. The young professor who racks his brains in the tower of the Black Monastery over the idea of the righteousness of God is a very different person from Luther the reformer, who from that same tower thunders against the Papacy. For years yet, the young professor remains a sincere monk and scholastic. Only gradually does he grow into his new religious outlook, and only gradually do the old ideals and authorities lose their power over his mind. Not until 1515 does he succeed in shaking off the last threads of that tattered web, the Occamist doctrine of salvation; and only during the two following years does he quite conquer the monastic conception of humility, realising more and more that spiritual happiness does not lie simply in unconditional surrender to the will of God, but above all in an invincible confidence in God's gracious love. For just as true communion between human beings can only come about if they have utter trust in one another, so also communion between God and man can only exist when man has attained the joyous certainty that he can trust in God's goodness and steadfastness with unreserved confidence. Because this progress was accomplished so slowly and gradually, Luther himself was never rightly aware of the irreconcilable opposition between his views and the fundamental outlook of Catholic piety. "In confusion and uncertainty, like a horse whose eyes are dazzled, he was led on by God," until at last his beliefs were ripened and assured; until at last, not indeed out of "wisdom and foresight," but with no suspicion whither his path would lead him, he turned on the "deceived deceivers of the people," whom he had already attacked so sharply in the Commentary on Romans, and openly challenged them to combat.

We have now to consider whether this development was accomplished quite without exterior influences, or whether the young monk found guides and helpers who directed him, accompanied him, even preceded him on the lonely path which he trod like some sleep-walker, unhesitatingly, yet without clear knowledge of his goal. This question, too, has recently been much discussed, and many different answers have been forthcoming. Denifle gives William of Occam as his principal teacher and master; Albert Maria Weiss gives John Wyclif; Braun and Johannes Ficker give the mediaeval mystics and Johann von Staupitz; Loofs gives Augustine and Bernard of Clairvaux; Büttner, Stange and Mandel give Johann Tauler and the unknown author of the *Theologia Germanica*. According to H. Barge, Andreas Karlstadt, though not strictly a forerunner, yet prepared the ground for his battles; and according to Kampschulte, Janssen, Pastor and other Catholic writers, his conduct and convictions were decisively influenced, even after the beginning of the open struggle, by the humanists

Crotus Rubeanus and Ulrich von Hutten, who, indeed, first made him into a reformer and caused him to rise up as leader of the nation in the struggle against Rome. Attempts to solve this interesting problem are therefore not lacking. But clearly not all solutions can be correct solutions. What Barge says, for instance, concerning Karlstadt's influence on Luther is disproved by a single glance into the Commentary on Romans of 1515–16; for there we find already the new *vue d'ensemble* which Karlstadt brings forward in his 152 Theses on April 26, 1517. But truth and error cannot always be so promptly distinguished, and in consequence we must linger a moment over some of these theories.

In the summer of 1515 the reformer characterises the Occamists briefly and concisely as "pig theologers." This might seem to imply that he had already broken for ever with Occam and his fellows. But such a conclusion would be over-hasty. Luther never quite got free of the pig theologers; he remained all his life an Occamist up to a certain point, and as regards some of his doctrines may, indeed, as Denifle maintains, be regarded as an epigone of Occam's, merely continuing and developing Occam's work. His teaching upon the Communion and the omnipresence of the body of Christ, the concepts, proofs and analogies which he brings forward in the dispute over these teachings, all are derived directly from Occam, D'Ailly, and Biel. Indeed, he seems almost to have felt that he could not carry this struggle through unless he did so as an Occamist: so starkly and unreservedly does he state in his polemic the Occamist view of the Revelation as a collection of irrational or anti-rational lessons, so uncompromisingly does he demand in the name of faith, like Occam, the sacrifice of the intellect, the enslavement of reason, and blind submission to all the irrational elements of Christian doctrine. Nor is it only in this point, or only in that dogma, so often since regarded as essentially Lutheran, that he shows himself as a true pupil of Occam. Elsewhere, too, he follows the invincible doctor more often, perhaps, than is generally supposed, both in his thoughts and in his method of thinking. Classic proofs are his much-discussed teaching upon the inviolability of the secrecy of the confessional and the permissibility of the lie of expediency, also his teaching on natural law and natural right, on the position of the temporal authority towards natural right and towards written law, and on the right of reform possessed by the temporal authority; his disparaging judgment on jurisprudence and jurists, his sweeping condemnation of the "blind, wild heathen" Aristotle, and all philosophers who, like himself, devoted themselves to metaphysics, his view of the relation between reason and revelation, and his very characteristic verdict on the utter incapacity of reason to explore that final cause of all being which lies beyond the range of experience. It is indeed impossible, then, to understand anything of his theology or his outlook on life without constantly bearing in mind that he passed through the school of the "moderns" of that time. But can we on that account dismiss him incontinently, as Denifle does, as a "boneless Occamist"? To go so far would be doing violence to truth. For if we turn to the fundamental religious thoughts of his message, his conception of evil and sin, of the remission of sins and grace, of the law and the Gospel, of piety as a religious and as a moral attitude, it is easy to perceive that these fundamental thoughts were won in a struggle against Occamist theology. His *Christianity* is therefore anything but a "boneless" or enfeebled Occamism; it is rather, in all its essential features, the most complete contradiction to Occamism that can be imagined.

But that does not exclude the fact that Occam, if he did not exactly help him, at least made it far easier for him to conquer mediaeval religion. The typical thinkers of the Middle Ages were not capable of imagining the spiritual as something purely spiritual. Just as they thought of God always as a substance, so they regarded sin not exactly as a substance but as a deficiency in substance, grace as the divine matter which eked out this inadequacy of substance, and justification as the process by which this compensation was effected and the naked human being was changed from a sinner to a righteous man. The first to make a stand against this materialistic conception was Duns Scotus, and he was soon imitated with even greater vigour by Occam. Regarding God strictly as Will, Occam saw in sin also only an activity of the will, and in grace only a "spiritual ornament," a kind of stamp by which God recognises the actions of men as acceptable. Accordingly, he understood the forgiveness of sins as signifying not an infusion of the substance of righteousness, but simply the non-imputation of sin. "Justification," in Augustine's sense, he allowed to remain in his system, as an independent process following the non-imputation of sin, but in reality he could make no good use of this dogma. Luther had only to fling overboard the conceptions of grace and justification which the "invincible" had maintained in a completely meaningless and emasculated form, and to fill the hollow concept of "non-imputation" with new import in accordance with his religious outlook, and he had then on this point broken with the Catholic system. Naturally it was not so simple and easy in the doing as it is in the telling. It cost him much hot struggle and heavy labour. But it cannot be doubted that Occam made the work lighter for him and that the concept of the "non-imputation of sin" provided a formula which easily lent itself to the presentment of Luther's own beliefs. No less significant to him was the criticism of Occam and the Occamists upon another point. These sagacious "pleaders of man's cause against Augustine" sought to prove in their doctrine of penance and absolution, as in their doctrine of salvation, that man can perform by his own strength all that God may demand of him, and therefore has no *inward* need of either "grace" or the Church in his penitence. To Biel, for example, the sacrament of penance is far less important than penance apart from the sacrament. And in what, according to him, does penance, apart from the sacrament, consist? In a "change of heart" in man, which of necessity brings about a change of heart in God, causing Him to suspend the threatened condemnation and regard the sinner as once more eligible for salvation. This at first sight is so strongly reminiscent of Luther's later views that one might assume he had learned directly from Biel in this matter. But on closer examination the impression fades. To Luther the "change of heart" on the part of God comes first; to Biel it is always thought of as consequent upon a "change of heart" in man. According to Luther, only God can change the heart of man; according to Biel, man can and must bring about the change himself. Luther, therefore, places all the stress upon God's gesture, Biel upon that of man. This in itself implies that Biel's doctrine of penance could at first only plunge Luther into new doubts and fears. Only when he had conquered Biel's fundamental thought, which was fatal to the development of his own feelings, could he suck honey even from this poisonous flower. Only then did Biel's criticism of the ecclesiastical doctrine of penance gain importance and value to him, as a means of shattering and casting aside completely those hollow husks of the old dogma which still clung to him.

But Occam was not only the most acute critic that the Middle Ages produced of the ecclesiastical doctrine of salvation; he was also the keenest critic and opponent C. of the hierarchical system. He maintained roundly and unequivocally that Popes and Councils were liable to error. He declared it to be an open question whether the monarchical form of government was advantageous to the Church, denied Pope and clergy all right to intervene in secular matters, and allotted to the former at most only the authority of an ecclesiastical official, who in worldly matters was subject to the Emperor like any other man. We do not know whether, or how far, Luther was familiar with these radical opinions before 1517. But in any case it was not altogether without significance for his development that he grew up in a school of theology whose founders and most influential spokesmen were declared adversaries of the Papal system. He was never, even whilst he still held high ideas of the sanctity of the Roman Church, a Papist in the strictest sense of the word; and it was for that reason that he broke with the Curialistic conceptions so quickly and with so little severe inward struggle, when he was forced into conflict with them by Prierias and Eck.

But did the Occamists aid him only negatively, only by their criticism—did they not also help him by positive suggestions and indications to work his way out of the labyrinth of doubt and anguish into which they themselves first thrust him? If we read what the "invincible" Occam says, in his famous "Dialogue" and elsewhere, concerning the Holy Scriptures, it seems as if he did show the young monk the way out of his inward confusion, not indeed directly, but by pointing emphatically to the sole source of good counsel. There we read that the Bible alone is infallible; so that the Christian is only bound to believe what is written in the Bible or can be logically deduced from the words of Holy Writ. But could this statement greatly profit Luther? Only if Occam revealed to him at the same time a true understanding of the Scriptures, for he had already studied the Bible industriously enough, as both the prescriptions of his Order and his natural impulse bade him. And was Occam capable of this? It is sufficient answer that the Bible was to Occam only a chance collection of divine oracles, contrary to reason, that he regarded the doctrine of the Church always as the correct interpretation of these oracles, and saw in his doctrine of salvation again only the correct interpretation of the ecclesiastical teaching. He was therefore essentially no Biblicist and could never have made a Biblicist of Luther. On the contrary, had Luther followed him, the Bible would ever have remained to him a book with seven seals, and it would never even have occurred to him to make clear to himself, by serious and unprejudiced study, what the Holy Book really says. Only when the reformer already understood the Bible, and was quite sure of his new convictions, did the moderns' view of the Bible gain a certain significance for him, and then not on account of its positive content, but solely through its negative consequences—that is, its polemic against the infallibility of the Popes and the Councils. The value of Occamist *criticism* to Luther's development can thus hardly be overestimated. It offered him a whole arsenal of weapons to use in the struggle against Catholic dogma and the Catholic constitutional and legal system; it made his gradual breach with the old faith easier psychologically at every point; it even offered him, in the neat formula of "the non-imputation of sin through the mercy of God," a group of concepts well suited to express his new convictions. But these convictions themselves cannot be attributed in any degree to the Occamists; they were not derived from them, but on the contrary were won by repeated conflict with them, and could be won in no other way. At most the Occamist professors at Erfurt helped the young monk in his distress only in so far as they pointed repeatedly and emphatically to Augustine as the greatest of all theologians, and thus encouraged him to study Augustine thoroughly himself, as he began to do not later than 1509, until finally he "had read and absorbed almost all the works of the great Father of the Church."

We possess still the two folios with which he appears to have begun his study of Augustine, and, from the marginal comments which he made with a flowing pen as he read, we can still determine to some extent what most particularly interested him in these volumes. He seems to have been struck not so much by the saint's later thoughts upon sin and grace, which afterwards became so precious to him, as by the views of the young Augustine upon God and Paradise, influenced as they were by Neoplatonic Mysticism, and his later speculations on the mystery of the Trinity. This is perhaps partly due to the fact that in those very years he studied with great eagerness a series of ancient and modern mystics, Dionysius Areopagitica and Bernard of Clairvaux, Hugo of St. Victor and Bonaventura, Gerhard of Zutphen, Jean Momboir and probably others besides. Certainly it was Augustine who first encouraged him to try the road to salvation recommended by Mysticism, and strive according to the precepts of Dionysius and St. Bernard to "climb up into the majestic Presence," to "gaze upon the sheer majesty of God," to experience union with God in illuminations and ecstasies. And indeed there were hours in which he felt himself to be "among the choirs of the angels." But always he returned to sober earth. His fears of conscience always returned, and even if he did not lay the blame for this upon the religious method of the mystics, but upon the defective purity of his will, he still could not long conceal from himself that he was not capable of grasping completely the basic mystical doctrine—the unification of the soul with God. How, indeed, could he have grasped it? To the mystic, God is Substance, and the human soul in its inmost being is a part of the eternal God-Substance: the soul is hindered only by the body from rising and merging into the "emptiness and silence of Godhead," as the drop of water is lost in the sea; by the body, and the conceptions, feelings and desires inevitably arising from the imprisonment of the soul within the body. If the divine element in the soul is to be made one with the indivisible Godhead, the body must by strict asceticism be made, as it were, transparent, so that the soul can escape from it, or the Godhead flow into it; and by a different sort of asceticism, namely, by all kinds of contemplative exercises, the spirit must be trained until it has only room for one thought—God. To Luther, as to Occam, God was always a Person, the Almighty, omnipotent Lord of the World, the mysterious Spring of all happenings in nature and in history, and also the absolute and holy Will, which desires and demands only the good. He felt himself separated from this holy God not by his body but by that power in his soul which he recognised as the strongest and most vital force of his body—his will, which was never directed consistently and exclusively towards the good. If the idea of unification meant anything at all to him, he could only think of it as union of the will, or a communion between God and man as individuals. But such communion could not seem possible to him whilst he was so keenly aware of the distance, and indeed the opposition, between God and man, which to him was a definite opposition, the absolute opposition between good and evil—that is, whilst he himself had not attained absolute purity of will. It may be said then that Occam's influence, and his own highly developed sense of sin, had made him inaccessible to the outlook on life peculiar to Mysticism. Nevertheless he made the most strenuous efforts to acclimatise himself to this essentially alien world of thought. This appears clearly in the notes to his earliest commentaries from the years 1513 to 1515. There indeed he seems sometimes to speak entirely as a mystic. But on looking more closely one realises that he has not assimilated the most important dogma of Neoplatonism, the doctrine of Ideas. He does not either believe that the general conceptions of human reason correspond exactly to the "Ideas," the invisible, eternal forces, which determine and condition the nature and being of individual things, nor does he see in the living world a graduated system of forces and existences all descended from the original Being, upon Whom they depend as their living focus. Similarly, he has no idea of a gradual evolution of thought from the lowest to the highest forms of being; and much as he emphasises on occasion the absolute value of the supersensual, spiritual and invisible, and the worthlessness of the visible, yet he does not regard the material, sensual and visible, with the Neoplatonists, as a mere reflection or illusion. On this question his views are exactly those of Occam: he continues to see in human ideas symbols produced in the mind by an inward necessity, signs representing individual things, and in divine ideas nothing more than God's conception of individual things. Thus neither the study of Augustine nor the study of those other mystics won him over to Mysticism. Yet these studies were not without significance for his development. It was in itself an advantage not to be despised that at last, after years of wandering hither and thither in the labyrinth of modern theology, he became familiar with an entirely different view of the universe and entirely different answers to the riddles which perplexed him. It is true that he could make no good use of these answers. Yet their effect upon his thought was in the highest degree suggestive and vivifying, and encouraged him to free himself more and more from the hypnotic influence which the invincible Doctor had so far exercised over him. But complete victory over the "invincible" he could not win until, at the end of 1512 or the beginning of 1513, there came to him a new understanding of God's nature and His ways to man. Only through this experience also was Augustine's view of salvation wholly revealed to his comprehension, only after this did the great teacher become a really helpful confederate and staunch ally in the remaining years of struggle against the "godless" theology, that Babylonish captivity in which he had pined so long.

Almost more than to Augustine, the reformer later felt himself indebted to Bernard of Clairvaux and Johann von Staupitz. St. Bernard (*d.* 1153) was indeed a firm adherent of speculative Mysticism, and in his theological writings zealously upheld the general Catholic beliefs concerning good works, the Old Testament law, and the meritorious value of the monastic chastisements, but there was in his religious outlook already an evangelical element. He at times, like Luther, saw in the forgiveness of sins the greatest of all good, spoke of justification by faith alone, and regarded "justification" quite clearly as the establishment of a new relationship between God and man, whereby God does not impute sin, although the sinner has not yet conquered it. He defined penance therefore, in a famous passage, exactly as Luther did in the first of his ninety-five Theses, as a process of moral purification continuing through the whole life of the repentant sinner; and even stated, like Luther afterwards: It is not enough to believe in a general way that God forgives sins; you must also believe that He forgives *you*. But above all he pointed again and again to the Cross of Golgotha as the irrefragable proof of God's merciful love for sinful humanity, and emphatically designated the humility that is unconscious of any merit, and constant repentance of sin, as the right mood and attitude of man towards God. It will be easily understood from this that he early made an impression upon Luther. The words: "You must believe also that God has forgiven *you*," were brought to the notice of the uneasy young monk by the Master of Novices as early as 1505–6, and they at once struck root in his soul and remained unforgettable all his life, as the first word of comfort that had raised him up in his distress. No less persistent was the influence upon him of Bernard's constant appeal to the Cross of Golgotha. Formerly, when he read or heard of Christ, he saw only the threatening vision of the world's Judge upon the rainbow, relentlessly demanding payment of the sinner, and the thought of that condemnatory Judge was only endurable because he knew what power lay in the intercession of Mary and the kindly saints; but now the gentle Healer and Saviour of sinners was also revealed to him, whom he had never yet known aright, often and devoutly as he had read the story of the Passion and heard beside deathbeds the exhortation: "Set your hopes upon Him, Who shed His blood for you." And if he could not at once rid himself of the old lugubrious pictures of the Last Judgment, at least a beginning was made, a new religious outlook won, which drew him again and again out of the narrow circle of habitual thoughts and conceptions in which he had turned until he was sick and weary.

But Bernard could hardly have made such an impression upon him had he not found at the same time a teacher of souls who, as a true pupil of the great saint, repeatedly drew his attention to the same facts—the Vicar of the Order, Johann von Staupitz.[1] We do not know when Staupitz first came to know Brother Martin. Their first prolonged intercourse was, however, at Wittenberg from October 1508 till the spring of 1509. Nor did the two men meet very often in later years, and very seldom for long consecutive periods. What, then, made this comparatively scanty intercourse so important to Luther, especially in that difficult winter of 1508–9, when, as a substitute for Brother Wolfgang Ostermayr, he delivered the commentary on the Nichomachean Ethics of Aristotle at Wittenberg? In the first place, Staupitz, like Bernard, led him ever back to the Crucifixion as the indubitable proof of God's love for the erring human race. This overwhelming revelation of God's true nature enabled him to understand far better to what end the Eternal had predestined men at the beginning of time. Further, Staupitz admonished him to make up his mind to the equally unquestionable fact that he was really and undeniably a sinner. Most important of all, he sought to cure him of the illusion that he could attain a truly repentant heart according to Biel's precept, gradually transforming the thoughts and feelings of innate self-love into pure love of God by a prescribed method; this he combated with the words which pierced Luther's soul like a strong arrow: Love of God and righteousness is not the end, but the beginning of true repentance. What did he mean by this? "You torment yourself uselessly. For long now I have ceased to do that. I wait in peace for God to shed His grace upon me." Thus from wise lips Luther heard for the first time that the principle of self-perfection was worthless. But was that any lasting help to him? No. For that consciousness of God which Staupitz bade him await was a thing unattainable to him. Staupitz was assured that at such hours God Himself entered into his spirit. Luther was incapable even of comprehending this mystical process of thought, and Staupitz on his side could not understand that Luther, urged on by an obscure impulse, was striving for the personal certainty of forgiveness. And, had he been able to realise this, he would in all probability have taken Luther seriously to task. For, like Bernard, he regarded it as a sin even to ask God for such a personal assurance. Yet, though he did not understand Brother Martin, he always let him feel how gladly he would have helped him, and how much interest he felt in his pupil's spiritual condition. Luther, completely isolated in soul, who from childhood associated the word "father" with an idea of unbending harshness and severity, learned for the first time from his association with Staupitz what fatherly love was, and this experience helped him immeasurably. Probably, indeed, it consoled and encouraged him more than all the spiritual counsels and exhortations of the pious Vicar, which, though well meant, were not always such as he could then profit by. Neither Bernard nor Staupitz could drive away permanently the despair of soul which possessed him in those hardest years of inward struggle. All that they could offer him was a transitory relief, which admittedly was always of great benefit to him. But full comprehension of their advice and of their thoughts on the Crucifixion could only become his after that crucial hour of his life, at the end of 1512 or the beginning of 1513, when he himself found the true God.

---

[1] Staupitz: *cf.* principally *Table Talk*, Nos. 2797a, 4806, 4868, 137, 141, 461, 518, 526, 1017, 1490, 1820, 2654a, 3680. Corr. i, 196; iii, 84 f.; iv, 231. N. Paulus in the *Historisches Jahrbuch*, xii, 346, rightly emphasised the fact that Staupitz always adhered to Catholicism.

Staupitz and St. Bernard upheld the reformer in the hardest years of his inner conflict. Only during the course of the year 1515, when that terrible time was already past, did he become familiar with two of the great German mystics of the fourteenth century, whom for the next few years he acclaimed repeatedly, with immense enthusiasm, as the best of all theologians: Johann Tauler, and the unknown Frankfort author of the *Theologia Germanica*. It is still maintained, and his extravagant praises seem to lend support to the statement, that only through his encounter with these two holy men was Luther transformed from a man struggling desperately upon a dark sea into a reformer. But does this appear certain, or even probable, from the marginal notes in his copy of Tauler's sermons in the Zwickau Library, and from the passages in his works where he quotes the two mystics? Tauler and the Frankforter depict often and vividly the oppressive fear, the heaviness and inward distress, and all the pains which inevitably precede the "birth of God in the soul," the union of the divine element in the soul with the undivided Godhead. But how did Luther interpret this typical description of a typical mystical experience, expressly stated to be one which the mystic would undergo repeatedly? He saw in it the *one* entirely individual experience through which he had become a reformer, namely, the psychological turmoil into which he had been plunged by doubts of his vocation and the fears of an uneasy conscience, and which only ceased when his new understanding of Romans i. 16, 17, revealed to him that God was in essence pure love and mercy. Tauler also declared many times that man has not fully conquered self until he is ready, be it from love of God, devotion to his fellow-men, or desire to atone for his sins, to accept even the terrifying fate of eternal damnation. These theories made a great impression upon Luther, but only because he interpreted them entirely in the sense of his own views. The "acceptance of hell" (*resignatio ad infernum*) is to him not a thing which man can achieve of his own might, not a voluntary act of humility, but a spiritual condition which God bestows upon him. For God's power over man does not reach its aim until man feels himself compelled to submit to the righteousness of God's holy judgment for good or ill, and desires only to do God's will. Therefore God gives this experience to His chosen ones. For religion does not exist to appease the urgent longing of God's creatures for life and happiness, but in order that His will may find perfect accomplishment. Very welcome to the reformer, too, was the energetic protest of these two holy men against that baser piety which looks ever for rewards. But why did they condemn the "seeker of rewards"? Because he estimates his moral faculties too low, and will not force himself to that annihilation of self which must be attained before the ego can be merged in the "empty silence of Godhead." And why was this same idea so repugnant to Luther? Because the "seeker of rewards" places his moral faculties too *high*, and has the presumption to ask payment of God for his miserable works. Lastly, there was much profit to Luther in the repeated exhortation of the two older seekers of God: Suffer God—all else depends on that. But the phrase "suffer God" meant to him justification. To them, on the other hand, it meant the pains accompanying the birth of God in the soul, which must ever be preceded by a very energetic preparation on the part of the human being himself—that is, by a severe spiritual training which he himself must carry out. Luther in every case imputed his own thoughts to the two mystics, and in consequence ended by interpreting the whole terminology of Mysticism in accordance with his own thoughts, as is shown especially clearly in the great Commentary on the Psalms of 1519. It will suffice to demonstrate this in the case of one concept, which at that time was the central point of his religious outlook: the concept of humility. What is humility to the mystics? It is a *voluntary* contempt of self. Of such a voluntary contempt Luther will hear nothing. That is in his eyes only a forced, artificial, hypocritical humility, perfidiously masking the most dangerous of all forms of pride—spiritual pride. The true, genuine humility is something entirely different, something which man cannot wring from himself by force—namely, the unconditional self-condemnation which comes over him *against* his will and intention, when in the hour of moral collapse the unerring judgment of God reaches him; for he cannot but recognise in his conscience the justness of that judgment, however he may kick against the pricks. From all this it might almost seem that the reformer was not in any degree indebted to German mysticism. But this would be an error. As early as 1513 we find him saying that the torments of Hell consist of nothing else than the despair which man tastes in advance when he is racked by the torments of conscience. The obvious counterpart to this belief is that the felicity of Paradise is also a spiritual state, which man can enjoy here on earth—namely, the joyous love towards God, and the blessed serenity which it brings with it. But he did not then draw this conclusion. Only through Tauler and the *Theologia Germanica* was he first encouraged to do so. He found in both the belief that in the hours when God abandons him man experiences a foretaste of Hell, and in the happy moments of union with the Godhead a foretaste of Heaven.

These typically mystic utterances he interpreted, again, in his own sense, and taught consistently from 1517 onwards that Paradise is not solely a future blessedness for which we may confidently hope—this he had already maintained in 1513—but a present good, which the Christian possesses here and now, so long as he is certain of God's favour. Thus in this point too the Mystics gave him nothing directly, but only incited him to think out to their conclusion thoughts already latent in his mind in 1513. He went through essentially the same process with them as later with Hus, Wessel Gansfort, Goch and Savonarola. He involuntarily transformed these quite differently constituted minds into allies and kindred spirits, because in all he read he was ever involuntarily seeking answers to the entirely individual questions and problems which he had arrived at through his own meditation and experience. He misunderstood them, and only because he misunderstood them was he at last able to use them to some extent as helpers in his struggle towards a clearer grasp of his own peculiar religious conception.

But it does not follow that the last word has been said regarding Luther's relation to Mysticism in general. On the contrary, it was without question a matter of extreme importance to his inward development that at the monastery he became thoroughly familiar with Mysticism, in all its characteristic forms, from Dionysius Areopagitica down to the representatives of "modern" devotion. For in Mysticism he met with the fundamental impulse of religion at its most powerful, though in an alien guise—the longing to have contact with God, now and in person, and in connection with that the conviction that this experience was not possible without absolute purity of will. That this longing found an echo in his soul is as certain as the fact that his God was something quite different from the God of the Mystics, and that therefore he could never have reached God along the path they recommended. Similarly there can be no doubt that in his striving for absolute purity of will and in his tendency towards strict observation of himself he was repeatedly strengthened by Mysticism; but he took it even more seriously than Johann Tauler and the Frankforter, and so arrived at quite a different result from theirs, namely, the conclusion that man is no doubt capable of willing what is good now and then, but can never in this world succeed in willing *only* what is good. Thus Mysticism gave wings to his quest and his longing; and it was also principally through this medium that he came to know and appreciate two methods of religious education which remained always important and valuable to him: asceticism and the "Cross." It is true that he rejected the mystical valuation of asceticism as a means of freeing the soul from all sensuality and thus making it fit to receive the Godhead, just as he rejected the old monastic view that man by such mortifications could attain to supernatural gifts and powers. But in the *De Libertate* he still regarded the so-called cathartic asceticism as indispensable for the protection of the inner life against the too strong influence of natural instincts; later he advocates and demands only "gymnastic asceticism." But even in the *De Libertate* he stated with much emphasis, as no religious teacher had done before him, that it must be left to the individual to decide what freely chosen exercises of mortification and self-denial could best aid him in the task of self-education, and utters a warning against all exaggerated chastisements. Later on he pointed out that such moral gymnastics might easily lead to the opposite result, namely, a stronger excitation of the instincts, if it were not complemented by prayer and devotion. From the beginning, however, he esteemed more highly than asceticism another method of education, praised also with unbounded enthusiasm by the mystics—that of the Cross, or undeserved suffering. But the conception of the Cross also soon received from him quite another aspect. The message "Blessed are they which are persecuted" had been transformed in the preaching of the mystics into the imperative "Blessed are they that seek persecution." They had therefore forced themselves progressively to the most horrible and tasteless self-torments, often much akin to the methods of the Indian penitents. The reformer would hear nothing of such a perverted view as this. "Not the suffering that you think out for yourself"—so runs his admonition early in 1517—"but the suffering that comes upon you *against* your choice, thought and desire, is the way of the Cross, along which God leads you. There follow and be a willing pupil; that is the hour when your Master comes to you." But this true and genuine "holy Cross," the patient endurance of which alone enables the Christian to prove that he is in earnest in his wish to follow Christ, is of such high worth to him that, in order to give it fitting expression, he describes the revelation vouchsafed him in those richest years of his inward life as a theology of the Cross. For the Cross is to him both a symbol of God's gift (*donum*), through which man becomes the child of God, and a symbol of the highest task laid upon him—the imitation of Christ (*exemplum*)—the holy Sign in which the Christian, like Christ before him, may gain victory again and again over the powers antagonistic to God.

Luther's development therefore bears out the old principle that the human mind, like the plant, absorbs from its environment only such food as is suited to its nature. "Modern" theology and philosophy; Gabriel Biel's doctrine and penance, and the old monastic doctrine of humility and perfect love towards God; the speculative and edifying reflections of the Greek, Roman and Germanic mystics, from the false Dionysius to the last important representative of modern devotion, the Dutchman Jean Momboir; the early views of Augustine, inspired by Plotinus, and his later views, entirely concentrated upon the great theme of sin and grace; the personal advice of the Erfurt Master of Novices, of the Erfurt Professor Bartholomäus Arnoldi von Usingen and of the Vicar-General Staupitz—all this was made to serve his development, yet he never became the intellectually dependent servant of any man or the slave of any alien system; nor was he deflected in any degree from the path which he was following, alone, uncomprehended by his closest neighbours, towards a goal unknown to himself. Perhaps the most conspicuous proof of this is the remarkable way in which thoughts and systems of thought entirely opposed to one another acted upon him sometimes simultaneously. Thus unquestionably Augustine and the mystics made it easier for him finally to overcome Occam. But at the same time the influence over him which the invincible Doctor possessed made it so hard for him even to understand thoroughly the mystical outlook on life and the vast concepts of the Augustinian doctrine of salvation that these helpers could not become masters of his thinking. In general, he understood all the strange minds that crossed his path only in so far as they resembled him or merely seemed to resemble him, and only what he believed he had understood, and was able to some extent to appreciate for himself, did he seize with sure instinct out of the abundance of new ideas he learned to know on such occasions. The most convincing example of this is his relation to Tauler and the Frankfort theologian. Actually, on all the questions important to him, he completely misunderstood them both. But just because he misunderstood them, and only because he misunderstood them, was this acquaintance so fruitful to him—first, because it gave him the glad feeling that he did not stand entirely alone in his convictions; secondly, because he was encouraged by it to imagine not only the torments of Hell but also, as a logical consequence, the joys of Paradise as something purely spiritual, a blessing which man may taste in advance, in this life—thus completing his religious conception on an important point. For after all that he had experienced inwardly and all that he had learned from St. Paul, it could no longer be doubtful to him that this spiritual good consisted in nothing but the personal certainty of God's favour after which he had thirsted and striven so long, driven by an obscure impulse. The two old seekers after God, as good Catholics, had never felt any trace of such an impulse. And if they had felt it they would certainly, like Bernard and Staupitz, have sought to suppress it forthwith as a temptation of Satan. They are therefore quite innocent of that pregnant discovery. They merely helped Luther to overcome the last little check which hindered him from formulating the discovery clearly and definitely. Even so, he never entirely mastered it until the world suddenly drew him out of the narrow circles in which hitherto his existence had moved, and forced him to test his new realisation ever afresh in daily struggle with antagonistic powers.

But with all this he had apparently only found a new answer to the old question which had troubled him so sorely even as a young Magister,[1] and afterwards at the monastery plunged him into such fearful inward struggles—the question: " What must I do to find a gracious God ? " True; but this old question, familiar not only to him, but also to western Christianity for more than a thousand years, had meanwhile received an entirely new meaning for him, because in the seven years from 1505 to 1512 a *volte-face* had taken place in his ideas of God and God's grace and the way to find a gracious God, no less great and rich with consequences in its way than the transformation in men's views of the sun, moon and stars brought about by the discovery of Copernicus. Whereas in 1505 his ego had seemed to him a centre of forces of inexhaustible energy, moving perpetually of its own free and absolute will along its own path, without the need of any driving force from without, now it seemed to him only a small, dependent star, without any motion of its own, which circled about the enormous sun, God, and must receive from that sun all power and light wherewith to illumine itself and others. Accordingly, whereas he had before expected everything from his own will and endeavour, he now expected everything from the might and mercifulness of God. It may be maintained, indeed, that he would never have realised how the meaning of the question had changed for him, but would have gradually wearied and consumed himself in endless vain struggles with the Catholic conception of the problem, had not the Bible come to his aid; and, having regard to this, one might establish the thesis that the starting-point and first cause of the Reformation was a new apprehension or experience of the Bible. But, again, the Bible would probably have remained to him all his life long a book with seven seals, had he not passed through the school of modern theology and Mysticism, and thus been prepared for such an experience; and neither Mysticism nor modern theology nor the Bible could have worked upon him as they did, had not something in him responded in such an entirely individual way to all the outer influences with which he came in contact. It does not greatly matter what name is given to this mysterious "something"—disposition, talent, individuality, character, personality. For this much is clear—we are dealing here with something beyond analysis, something whose component parts cannot be distinguished by the eye of the microscope itself. For the historian, indeed, it must always be most grievous that in his endeavours to explain the evolution of the reformer and the Reformation he is ever brought to a standstill by that insoluble riddle of greatness. But the most determined analyst will at last have no choice but to admit that the "force" which called forth these "movements" cannot be explained; all that is possible is to state that it is there. Only its emanations can be caught by analytical reason in the net of words and concepts. Even these are in reality not explained, only their outward appearance is made known and described. But to describe and to explain are by no means the same thing.

---

[1] Proof; *Table Talk*, No. 3293, not the famous passage, often quoted as the classic evidence, from the sermon of February 1, 1534, *Werke*, Weimar ed., xxxvii, 661 : " O when wilt thou become pious at last and do enough to find a gracious God ? And through such thoughts I was driven to monkery." This text (*a*) is not by Luther himself, but is a very free paraphrase of the words spoken orally by him but not correctly heard by the copyist, Georg Rörer, for which the editor of the sermon, Kaspar Kruciger, is alone responsible, see *ibid.*, p. 274; (*b*) " Monkery " with Luther never means entry into the monastic state, but a monkish mode of life, *cf.* Grimm *sub voce*. Here the context shows that he is referring only to the chastisements to which he subjected himself at the monastery as a monk.

What is true of Luther's personality is also entirely true of the struggles, experiences and realisations of which he himself tells us—they are so absolutely individual that the question forces itself ever anew upon the observer: How could such absolutely individual experiences acquire such enormous significance for thousands and millions of human beings, and finally lead to a transformation of the first order in the history of the world? But when one looks into it more closely, one realises that here, as so often happens, a struggle dealing with universal questions fought itself out in the soul of an individual man, namely, a struggle around the vital problem of all higher religion—the question: How does man attain communion with God?—and at the same time a struggle around the chief problems of the religion of salvation, namely: Is it God or man who turns the balance in the matter of salvation? In Mysticism and the theology of Augustine and St. Paul the monk Luther was faced with the various solutions to the former problem, in modern theology with the two possible solutions to the latter problem, in irreconcilable opposition. It is for this reason that his study and analysis of this theology were so important to his development, and the solution he finally found so rich in consequences to his contemporaries and to posterity.

Yet full of significance as the problems appear with which his seeking was concerned, and uncommon, new and original as are the solutions which he finally reached, all his outward life in those years seems equally insignificant, equally devoid of the uncommon and exceptional. Like thousands of young Germans of this time, he went through first the usual curriculum of the *trivium* and then the prescribed lectures, exercises and examinations of a Faculty of Arts, in a completely normal manner; he was then, like so many men of the Middle Ages before him, decided on July 2, 1505, by an unexpected external event—namely, a violent thunderstorm, which caused a transient injury to his foot [1]—to vow to become a monk. Like so many others, he at first regretted the resolution made suddenly in the fear of death. Therefore, like so many others, he allowed himself a few weeks' delay before, on July 16, he entered the cloister. But this remained the sole exceptional occurrence of his life, for in the monastic cell he still experienced absolutely nothing which would distinguish him from his fellows. He heard no voices, he saw no visions, he did nothing but what all monks do: pray, meditate and study. Even the "illumination" which first gave an aim to his inward struggles has absolutely nothing miraculous in itself. For in what does it consist? In the sudden comprehension of a phrase of St. Paul, which, to-day at least, is comprehensible to anyone who reads the Apostle attentively. And the new realisation was clarified, even as it had been gained, entirely in the silence of his cell, without any shattering exterior or moral catastrophes, and without any change whatever in the manner of his life or the nature of his activity. He remained outwardly what he had been before, and studied on without interruption. The only thing which seems abnormal in his development is the exceptionally slow rate of its accomplishment. Whereas August Hermann Francke arrived at inward peace in the space of half an hour, Loyola in a few hard months, Luther needed at least seven years, and after that four more years (1513–17), before his new religious outlook was quite complete, at least in its essential features, and then no fewer than thirteen years more before he had thought it out to its last critical consequences, as far as he felt the impulse to do so. In view of this it would almost seem as if he suffered in an unusual degree from the proverbial ponderousness and circumstantial scrupulosity of his "dear Germans." But if all the folios and quartos which he worked through in the years 1515 to 1517 are once marched before us in rank and file, and if we realise merely from a few examples what a huge mass of complicated notions and subtle arguments, what a confusion of dogmas, half dogmas, quarters and eighths of dogmas, pious and impious opinions he had first to absorb and then to master by critical thought; if we further realise that he could never have attained his new religious outlook, far less have held fast to it, had he not mentally overcome the old theology and created a completely new theology—then, on the other hand, we wonder more and more that a single human being could accomplish such a gigantic work in so comparatively short a time. How much easier in this respect was the task of all the great Christian thinkers before him, and yet how long it took even the greatest of them—Augustine—merely to settle with the ideals of his youth, ideals which he had come to regard as errors !

---

[1] *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte*, v. 370.

Luther, however, was not only a religious thinker and character : he was also a reformer. The question therefore arises : Is the reformer as original and independent as the religious thinker ? Is the Luther who flung the Bull of Excommunication into the fire, who set himself as spokesman of the nation at the head of the national Freedom-from-Rome movement, and, prophet-like, gave utterance upon all great and small questions of the time with unheard-of audacity and openness—is he only the more mature brother of Luther the young monk, who, like a true theological polemic, only measured himself with theologians ; or did the young polemic first develop into a reformer under the educative influence of freer and stronger minds, into whose sphere he came towards the end of 1519 ? This question too has received lively attention from research, and has met with varied answers. Some scholars do not even perceive the existence of a problem ; to others Luther the reformer is merely the docile pupil of the "syphilitic" Ulrich von Hutten and his friend Crotus Rubeanus, the principal author of the *Dunkelmännerbriefe*. Only through intercourse with these revolutionary patriots, so it is still maintained, did the unworldly monk discover his German heart, only their example inspired him to turn to the whole nation. It is Hutten's spirit and challenging boldness that speak from the great Reformation writings of 1520, and indeed the most powerful of these, the "Address to the Nobility," is nothing but an extract from Hutten's great work *Vadiscus* or *Trias Romana*, and at the same time forms the documentary evidence of Luther's adherence to the "Hutten-Sickingen Revolutionary party." Proofs of this contention are, as it appears, not lacking, but it may be asked whether the evidence given is complete, and whether the facts appealed to are in all cases rightly interpreted.

It is only necessary to glance into the Commentary on Romans and the sermons of Luther the monk for the years 1513 to 1517 to realise that the "unworldly monk" was already very well acquainted with the world and that Luther the reformer was already upon the scene, even if for the time being he used only the chair and the pulpit as his tribune. In these sermons he already attacks the exaggerated cult of the saints and the abuse of indulgences with unhesitating criticism. In the commentary, as we have already seen, he expresses himself most frankly upon all possible evils in the Church and society; nor does he stop at mere criticism, but draws up a series of demands for quite definite reforms. At the same time, he begins to indicate his attitude towards the problem of nationality. He complains vigorously that the peoples, absorbed in their dissensions and jealousies, so often forget that they are Christians; but he states also with a certain satisfaction that the Greeks were even greater drunkards than his dear Germans, and he announces already the warmest respect and sympathy for his ruler, Friederich der Weise. Three years later, in June 1518, he turns against the arrogant disparagement of German theologians by foreigners, and, in consideration of the *Theologia Germanica*, gives expression to the hope that the Germans may again find general recognition as the best theologians. But he had yet to experience in his own person how "the foreigners," in particular the Italians, thought themselves entitled to behave towards a German. The Italian Dominican Silvester da Prierio attacked him individually as a leper and a dog in an excessively superficial and insolent piece of writing. From the moment when this "genuine Italian product" came into his hands (August 1518) he felt the opposition between German and Italian just as keenly, and expressed it just as unreservedly, as Ulrich von Hutten. In October

1518 he publicly denounced the Roman Church's insatiable thirst for gold. In December he gave utterance to the suspicion that Antichrist ruled at the Curia. In February 1519 he named Rome "Babylon," and stated angrily: "We Germans alone have upheld the Popes, as far as we could. As a penalty we have had to suffer them as our masters in execration and oppression, and now in sucking dry the bishoprics and archbishoprics." And at the same time, in the preface to his exposition of the Epistle to the Galatians, he gave a definite prelude to the Address to the Christian Nobility. "Those godless windbags, Prierias, Cajetan and their fellows insult us Germans as oafs, simpletons, beasts, barbarians, and laugh at the unbelievable patience with which we let ourselves be deceived and plundered. Praise therefore to the German princes who lately at Augsburg (1518) refused the Curia the tithes, the twentieths, and the fiftieths. . . . The example of these lay theologians is most worthy of imitation . . . it is a greater proof of piety for the princes or anyone else to oppose the Curia, than to take the field against the Turks." In truth, the man who dared to write publicly in such a tone, a whole year before Hutten sounded the trumpet of war, had no need to borrow from Hutten nationalist anger and nationalist pathos, nor to breathe in courage from a *littérateur* such as Crotus Rubeanus, at heart cowardly and without principle. But even if Luther the patriot was thus on the scene long before Hutten declared war against Rome, and if the challenging boldness and relentlessness of the German beast was already a vexation to the Italians and a joy to the Germans before Hutten became known at all among the people, this does not exclude a possibility that the patriotic monk learned from Hutten and Crotus Rubeanus later on. Crotus, indeed, from October 1519 onwards, several times addressed long letters to Luther. But Luther never makes any mention of their content. Evidently they made no deep impression upon him. Hutten approached him first in 1520, offering him, through the medium of Melancthon, the protection of Franz von

Sickengen. In April he renewed the offer. In June, at last, he applied to Luther himself by letter, proposing a formal alliance. But this enthusiastic letter-writing did not lead to any more lively intercourse between the two men; we know of only four letters from Hutten to Luther and four from Luther to Hutten. Thus Hutten was perfectly right when he maintained in February 1523 that Luther had never been his ally. He only omitted to say that he himself had sought Luther's alliance most earnestly, but always with complete unsuccess. Luther's alleged alliance with the "Hutten-Sickengen revolutionary party" is thus nothing more than a legend or a lie, a *Lügende*, as Luther would have said, a lie which is not made any more worthy of credence by the fact that it was current among Luther's opponents as early as 1521; for many other Luther legends share the same honourable old age.

Nevertheless, this scanty intercourse was not without fruit either to Luther or to Hutten. Both men, on the contrary, undoubtedly learnt from one another. As soon as Luther steps into Hutten's field of vision, the Frankish knight strikes a different note in his writings. The humanist becomes a national publicist. The acclaimed Latinist learns to write German prose, German verse. The frivolous poet suddenly places all his wild passion at the service of the national Freedom-from-Rome Movement, and the pagan mocker suddenly makes shift to read the Bible and talk like a pious Lutheran. Luther is principally indebted to Hutten for the publication of Lorenzo di Valla's work on the forged decretals of the Emperor Constantine. The reading of this made an immeasurable impression upon him. Thereafter it was practically a settled thing in his mind that the Pope was Antichrist. Hutten's own writings against Rome of February–March 1520 had far less to teach him. It is certain that he read them before he proceeded to the elaboration of his Address to the Christian Nobility. But, as comparison shows, he had far better and more exact information as to the "greed, luxury and pride" of Rome than Hutten could offer him. He had no need whatever to take extracts from the *Vadiscus*, as has been contended. But even if Hutten had nothing new to say to him, yet the enthusiastic applause of the Frankish knight was no more indifferent to him than the offers of Franz von Sickingen and Silvester von Schaumberg promising shelter and defence, the favourable judgment of Erasmus and other humanists, the encouraging letters of the Bohemian Utraquists, the growing sympathy of the German clergy and monks, the powerful movement among the young student class and the announcement of rising agitation among the masses. Ever more clearly did he realise from all these stormy portents that he did not stand alone, but that his cause was the cause of the whole nation; ever more strongly, as he recognised this, did the feeling come over him that the whole nation was preparing to gather around him, and ever more vigorously did the impulse stir in him, after he had appealed in vain to Pope and Council, now to appeal to his people, which, it seemed, only awaited his call to war. In this mood be began, in June 1520, his most powerful war manifesto against Rome, the Address to the Christian Nobility. And in this he does not turn only to the knights; he turns to his "dear Germans" as a whole, and expects the reform of the "Christian estate," *i.e.* the Church, to be accomplished not by the knights at all, but in the first place by the "noble blood of Carolus" and the secular princes—by the lay theologians, in fact, whose action he had prized so highly at the beginning of 1519. For by the term "nobility" he does not understand merely the knights, barons and counts, but the whole aristocracy. As for the proposed reforms which he then sets forth, they are for the most part not new or original. Not he himself, but Occam, is responsible for the idea by which he justifies his demand for the intervention of the aristocracy—the principle that in cases of emergency, when the forces of the Church fail, laymen too, and princes above all, have a right to reform ecclesiastical conditions and to call a General Council without the Pope's participation. But he gives quite a different turn to this theory of emergency, in that he will hear nothing of any right of the

Pope to interfere in worldly matters, in cases of emergency where the secular forces fail; further, he gives a completely new basis to this right of the aristocracy in the completely new religious idea of the universal priesthood of the faithful, and offers a clearly thought out programme such as we find in no other of the numerous pamphlets of the time of Charles V's accession.

It is thus a gross exaggeration to ascribe Luther's change from a reforming theologian into a national and religious reformer solely to Hutten's influence. The observation which forms the starting-point of this theory is undoubtedly a correct one: the Luther of 1520 is indeed a different man from the Luther of the ninety-five Theses. His aims are of far greater scope, his vision is far wider and clearer, his self-confidence far stronger. But this progress was not Hutten's work; it was the product of all the struggles which the reformer had had to go through since 1517, and at the same time a reaction to the increasingly powerful movement within the nation—a movement which had already begun before he appeared, which he served, without suspecting it, as early as 1517, and into which at the end of 1519 Hutten also flung himself with passionate delight. It is easy to understand that the reformer was not clearly aware of this imponderable influence of public opinion upon his development. He felt the current bearing him along more and more strongly, but he did not know whence the stream flowed. All the more loudly did he even in 1519 salute his opponents as his teachers. In truth, it was under their "kindly and fatherly" guidance that he had been led onward step by step, that he had come to know himself ever more clearly, until at last he became quite sure of his vocation and no longer doubted against whom he had to fight—against the Antichrist and his apostles.

CHAPTER III

THE EVOLUTION OF THE REFORMATION

THE Protestant world honours October 31, 1517, as the birthday of the Reformation. This has sound justification, but is apt to be misleading—giving rise to the mistaken supposition that Luther's opposition to the ecclesiastical authorities and conditions of his time dated only from that day, and that Johann Tetzel and the Indulgence of Mainz first caused him to raise the cry of war. In reality he had to a certain extent entered the struggle before this. For since 1515, from the pulpit and in his lectures, he had been continually criticising evils and abuses in all spheres of the Church's religious activity with constantly increasing freedom of expression. But nothing was known of this outside Wittenberg, and Luther himself was at first more interested in another question than in the reform of the Church—the reform of theological study. At Wittenberg he had by the middle of 1517 succeeded in breaking down the absolute monarchy of Scholasticism and in making the study of the Bible the central point of theological instruction. Now he wished to prepare the way for this reform outside Wittenberg. Thus he came to publish for the first time an open declaration of war—the ninety-seven Theses against Scholasticism of September 4, 1517. He had these theses printed. He sent them to his friends in Erfurt and Nüremberg, he even allowed them to reach the learned and intellectual Dr. Eck, and then waited in exceeding suspense and agitation for the verdict of the learned world. But the hoped-for response did not come. These ninety-seven Theses, on which he himself set such a high value, are to-day known only to specialists. Yet every child knows of the ninety-five Theses which he nailed to the door of the Castle Church at noon on October 31, though these he did not submit to his friends until of themselves they had begun to spread all over Germany ; so strangely was the truth of the saying proved in him, on this occasion too, that good work must be done in confusion and ignorance.

Well known as the ninety-five Theses are, it is yet only during the last few years that we have really known what this celebrated document is concerned with. Though even children at school talked about the indulgence as glibly as if they had watched it grow into leaf and flower, the indulgence was in fact still a great unknown quantity, at sight of which the scholar would ask himself with a sigh: "Where did it come from?" This ignorance was fundamentally due only to a mistaken way of approaching the question. It had become the custom to regard the indulgence from below, from the point of view of the purchaser of it. For it was believed that the primary cause of the whole mysterious institution could be perceived in the motives by which people were known or supposed to have been actuated in purchasing indulgences. This method, however, never led to an entirely clear notion. Therefore Adolf Gottlob in 1906 tried the opposite approach to the question. His principle was to regard the indulgence from above, from the standpoint of the distributor, asking: "What led the Popes and Bishops to offer indulgences?" And behold, the riddle was solved, the pieces of the puzzle fell into place. Pedigree, origin and development of the unknown quantity appeared clearly in the light, and doubts as to its original meaning came to an end. It revealed itself as a true descendant of the time of the great struggle between Christianity and Islam, and at the same time a highly characteristic product of Germanic Christianity.

We need here only demonstrate this in connection with the Papal full and plenary indulgences.

In the wars of religion between Christians and Mohammedans a question very early arose as to the salvation of the warriors who fell in these struggles. For the faithful Moslem, Mohammed had already solved the question. He marched to the holy war with the firm conviction that in the event of his death the gates of Paradise would immediately open to him. Not so the defender of the Christian faith.

He asked himself: Will Paradise open to me even if I have not done the regular penance for my sins? And this doubt might easily persuade him that it was better to stay at home. At an early period, therefore, the Popes, who had the fight against Islam particularly at heart, sought to scatter such doubts. With this intention Pope Leo IV, when he summoned the Franks to a crusade in 853, gave most confident assurances of a heavenly reward for the crusaders who should fall in battle. One of his immediate successors, John VIII, in 877 promised such crusaders absolution for their ecclesiastical sins. These promises of salvation were not as yet indulgences. For they did not apply to living persons owing penance, but to dead crusaders. But they prove that the idea which brought forth and nourished the indulgence already existed in the ninth century: the idea that participation in a war against the infidel, or any other enemies of religion, is an act of religious value, and indeed death in a holy war is a kind of martyrdom. He who suffers it is forthwith laid among the flowers of Paradise by St. Gabriel and St. Michael, as the *Chanson de Roland* later describes. Once the crusade was so highly thought of, it was an easy transition to regard participation in a crusade as equivalent to the performance of atonement, the incomplete fulfilment of which might cause many a valiant fighter to keep his war-horse in the stable, and to promise remission of these penances in return for expeditions against the Church's enemies, thus using the remission of penances as a means of recruiting troops. With this the indulgence of the Cross, that is the complete remission of penances as a reward for participation in a religious war, was an accomplished fact. When this indulgence came into existence cannot definitely be said. By all appearances, however, it was a German Pope who first dared to use the remission of penance as a method of recruiting—Leo IX, when he was arming for war against the Normans in 1052. Certainly this indulgence was granted by Alexander II in 1063 to the warriors marching to Spain against the Moors, by Gregory VII in 1080, to the faithful who were willing to fight for the Anti-king Rudolf of Swabia against the Emperor Henry IV, by Victor II in 1087 in return for taking part in the struggle against the Arabs in Africa, and by Urban II in 1095 for the crusade to Jerusalem. The indulgence of the Cross had then reached its full development. If it is remembered what inconveniences, what ecclesiastical and civil disadvantages the ecclesiastical penances entailed, it is easy to understand that penitents flocked to obtain this indulgence. But there was another motive of even stronger effect. The penances of the Church were considered as replacing the punishments of purification in Purgatory. Whoever gained an indulgence, therefore, won not only liberation from the penances, but also liberation from the corresponding purgatorial punishments. In this way from the beginning a transcendental influence was ascribed to the indulgence, an influence on Purgatory, and it was this aspect which made it seem so desirable to all. But the indulgence did not long remain a means of raising troops. Urban II absolved old and infirm persons from the duty of personal war service on condition that they provided and equipped a substitute at their own costs. Eugene III already in 1145 or 1146 promised remission of a seventh part of their penance to persons who supported the crusading order of Templars by a money contribution, and finally Innocent III in 1199 formally recognised the gift of money as adequate qualification for the benefits of indulgence of the Cross. Thus in the place of personal service appeared, even in the twelfth century, a material service, a payment of money. This immediately altered the whole character of the indulgence in a manner rich in consequences. From a means of raising troops it became a means of raising money, a form of taxation of the faithful, ever more frequently and ever more keenly exploited in the interest of the Papal finances. But in the course of the thirteenth century the idea of a crusade more and more lost its power over men's spirits. If the Popes would keep open the important source of income which the indulgence represented, they must invent new motives to attract people to the purchase of indulgences. It is the merit of Boniface VIII to have recognised this clearly. By creating the jubilee indulgence in 1300 he assured the species a further long development most welcome to the Papal finances. As a return service the jubilee originally required of the applicant a pilgrimage to Rome. But the jubilee soon repeated exactly the development of the indulgence of the Cross: personal service was replaced by material service, and just as Innocent III finally made it possible to obtain the indulgence of the Cross by payment of alms in any parish church, Boniface IX in the same way arranged that the jubilee should be obtainable anywhere, by causing it to be offered everywhere by agents from 1393 onwards. The indulgence thus became movable wares, the trade in indulgences a "holy trade." To facilitate the holy trade still more, the acquisition of the sacred wares was now certified by a spiritual bond note known as the letter of indulgence. Also the priests who were entrusted with this commerce were equipped with the fullest and most extensive powers of absolution, so that the believer saw himself in the agreeable position of being able at the shortest notice to procure first remission of the pains of Hell by confessing himself to one of the priests distributing indulgences, and then, by obtaining a letter of indulgence, remission of the ecclesiastical and purgatorial penances also. Absolution and indulgence thus became closely connected by Boniface IX's innovations. Therefore the sagacious Pope was able to designate this new form of the distribution of indulgences briefly as "remission of guilt and penance." For indeed in this way, he made it possible for believers to rid themselves first of guilt, by means of absolution, and then immediately, by the indulgence, of all the temporal punishments of sin.

But the development of the "holy wares" was not even yet concluded. The question had already arisen long ago whether the Pope had the capacity to deliver the dead also from Purgatory should some surviving descendant, relative or friend apply for the indulgence. As most of the ecclesiastical jurists gave a negative answer, this remained until the middle of the fifteenth century an open question. Calixtus III was, it seems, the first to venture an affirmative answer, as he did in 1457, and not until the time of Sixtus IV did the indulgence for the dead obtain full rights of citizenship. This Pope issued on November 27, 1477, a dogmatic declaration concerning the power of indulgences which was intended to overthrow any doubts as to the value of indulgences to the poor souls in Purgatory and which at the same time constituted an indirect claim on the part of the Pope to judicial power even over Purgatory.

In the Middle Ages, however, much was actually practised which was not approved or recognised as "Catholic truth" by strict theologians and ecclesiastical jurists. This is true to some extent in the matter of indulgences. The indulgence was already centuries old before the theologists took it into their heads to give it their serious attention. The first one to do so, Alexander of Hales, certainly performed his work so well that little was left to be done by later ages. His principal success was in discovering the transcendental capital out of which the Church as usufructuary was able to disburse the indulgence—the treasury of good works, the merits of Christ and the saints. This discovery was greeted with general applause. It was universally accepted. In 1343 Clement VI expressly recognises it in an appendix to the book of Canon Law, and it thus received dogmatic sanction. Together with the doctrine of the treasury, the same Pope approved the view that the indulgence gave remission of the whole or a part of the temporal punishments of sin ; but he did not expressly name the purgatorial punishments and thus left the doctrine of indulgences unsettled on essential points. So did it remain in the times that followed. For the declaration of Sixtus IV was not incorporated in the Canon Law. It was not available for use in the ecclesiastical courts. It counted as dogma only to firm Papalists, and Papalists in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries were not very numerous. The theologians who regarded the General Council as the supreme court of the faith were strongly preponderant in France, Spain, England and Germany. Thus there was in fact no complete dogma on the indulgence when Luther, forty years after Sixtus IV, laid before the learned world *his* declaration on the power of indulgences. In particular, there was still no official doctrine as to the effect of the indulgence upon Purgatory. In consequence the reformer did not make himself guilty of any heresy, but at most of "a statement offensive to pious ears" when he refused to accept the indulgence as anything more than the remission of the ecclesiastical penances. And even Cardinal Cajetan, with the best will in the world, was not able to attack him as a heretic on account of the ninety-five Theses.

In spite of this uncertain state of the law, however, the Popes announced one plenary indulgence, one jubilee after another, not only for the living but also for the dead, and found no scandal in the fact that it was the trade in indulgences for the dead which lay nearest the hearts of the indulgence agents. For the indulgence for the dead was the most profitable. One can well understand therefore that efficient agents such as the celebrated Johann Tetzel devoted themselves with the utmost energy precisely to this branch of the business. "Do you not hear," runs the model sermon of this "very bold and eloquent monk," "your dead parents screaming and crying: 'Have pity on me. We are in heavy pain and punishment, and you can deliver us with a little alms'"; and he would add as a reinforcement either in prose or verse, the old saying already condemned in 1482 by the Faculty of Theology in Paris: "So soon as coin in coffer rings, the soul from Purgatory springs." If the Papal indulgence in the years 1515–20 produced in spite of Luther's preaching a very handsome net profit, there is no doubt that a very large part, if not the major part, of it was due to the trade in indulgence tickets for the poor souls in Purgatory.

Such was the indulgence with which Luther had to deal. It will be seen that it was something quite different from the indulgences of to-day, for these are simply what are known as devotional indulgences—that is, they require from the applicant as a return service only an act of devotion, a pilgrimage, the recital of a certain prayer, etc. The mediaeval indulgence, however, is characterised in all its forms by the principle, drawn from Germanic law, that personal services are replaceable by material services, personal and corporal penalties by pecuniary penalties. It has therefore rightly been described as a product of the Germanic spirit on the soil of Western Christianity. But another driving force of Catholic piety is also to be seen at work; the same motive which caused the Church to emphasise so strongly that the effectiveness of its sacraments was independent not only of the personal worthiness of the priest administering them, but also of the religious susceptibility of the receiver (*opus operatum*), and resulted in the number of these objective and material means of grace being so much increased from century to century that finally, at the end of the Middle Ages, they had become to the people a kind of insurance policy against damnation—namely, the demand for guarantees of future blessedness as easily comprehensible and as absolutely certain as could possibly be. Indeed this demand manifested itself in no doctrine of the Church in such an elementary and immediate form as in the popular faith in indulgences, and by no ecclesiastical institution was it so fully satisfied as by the purely commercial trade in indulgence tickets. For what was the letter of indulgence? A spiritual note of bond, always made out in favour of some definite person, whether he were already dead or still among the living. It empowered the holder, no matter whether he himself had purchased the paper or some other person for his benefit, to receive from any confessing priest he chose, as many times as he chose, absolution from all ordinary misdeeds, and also, far more than this, absolution once during life and once in danger of death for the exceptional faults and penalties which by the law of the Church could only be remitted by a bishop or by the Pope. Thus the ticket represented a title-deed to salvation, visible to the eye and absolutely sure if correctly used. This naturally gave its possessor a comfortable sense of security which as a rule prevented the thought of "daily penitence and atonement" from arising any more. This feeling of security (*securitas de salute futura*) had greatly disturbed Luther as early as 1515. Why? Because it could in no way be reconciled with his attitude towards God nor his conception of salvation. For what did salvation mean to him? It meant, to will what God wills. But a man can only will what God wills, he believed, when he has become quite certain of God's favour (*certitudo salutis*); and again, he can only keep this certainty if he continually seeks God—that is, continually strives to do that which is good (Commentary on Romans, ii, 78). Nowhere did this sense of security, fed by the Church and flattered in every possible way, appear to him in such a gross and unrefined form as in the proceedings of the buyers of indulgences and the "market traffic" of the sellers. It is therefore no mere chance that the indulgence first made him conscious of the opposition to the accepted piety of the Church which had gradually grown up in him, and that his formal criticism of the abuse of indulgences, at first so moderate in substance, immediately had such an irritating effect on the zealous representatives of the old faith. They felt at once that he had touched the vital nerve not only of the hierarchical system but also of the whole traditional practice of religion, and therefore, by their contradiction, they forced him to carry his criticism further and further, until at last, one day, before the Pope had yet spoken his last word, he realised to his own wonderment that inwardly he had completely broken with "Popery" (February 24, 1520, to Spalatin).

The Council of Trent, at its twenty-fifth session, on December 3–4, 1563, abolished the indulgence purchaseable for money and condemned the traffic in indulgences and all its abuses in the strongest terms. Nevertheless there is still no lack of people who feel it necessary to defend the holy commerce by comparing it with the modern missions among the poor, etc. But this comparison is unsound. The popular mission is really a mission; the indulgence trade was at all times a trade. The missionary among the people seeks to win souls, whereas the dealer in indulgences was never concerned with anything but money and more money.[1] No concern for human souls ever played any part in the distribution of indulgences, least of all in the case of the indulgences which the Popes bestowed in almost unbroken succession from the jubilee of 1500 onwards. Their sole and exclusive object was to fill the Papal coffers. For this reason a firm of bankers, the famous Fugger, began in the time of Alexander VI to play a leading part in the development of the indulgence. This banking house little by little seized into its own hands practically the whole traffic of the Curia with Germany, Poland and the Scandinavian states. It was therefore to the interest of the firm to stimulate the intercourse of these countries with Rome as much as possible, and thus increase the flow of wealth to the Eternal City; for these very natural reasons its Roman representatives showed great zeal in furthering the issue of new indulgences. For as early as 1507, by virtue of a secret reservation of which the purchaser of the indulgence knew nothing, $33\frac{1}{3}$ per cent. of the profit on all indulgences flowed into the Papal exchequer, even though according to the paper it might be destined entirely for the restoration of churches, the building of dikes or other pious objects. In 1514, indeed, the firm formally set up as an indulgence agency. It obtained from the Curia the right to offer Papal indulgences to interested persons throughout Germany, but with the secret reservation that half the net profit should be set aside for the Curia. The Fugger were also successful in immediately disposing of a whole series of new indulgences in Germany. Outwardly, however, these did not appear quite the same. In one of them, at least, the Curia was named as the receiver of the profit, whilst half of it was secretly guaranteed to a person to whom the Curia felt itself indebted. This was the indulgence which brought Luther into the lists—the indulgence of Mainz, of March 31, 1515.

---

[1] Miltitz wrote on January 22, 1519: "I pointed out to Tetzel, in common with the agent of the Fugger—Andreas Matstedt, councillor and representative of the Fugger Bank in Leipzig—that besides free board, free transport with a carriage, 3 horses and the necessary riders, he received 80 Gulden a month for his trouble, apart from what he stole and misappropriated. For his servant (Veit) he received a further 10 Gulden a month." As Miltitz appeals to the Fugger's agent, who was responsible for paying Tetzel's enormous expenses, his testimony cannot be called in question. Tetzel's *servant* thus received more than the first official of the rich city of Leipzig, the Chief Town Clerk, and Tetzel himself nearly 1000 Gulden a year in cash alone, 10 times more than the said official. The begging monk had thus, as even Albrecht von Mainz complained, set up the indulgence trade quite "*kriegsgesellschaftsmässig.*" That he also committed thefts cannot, however, be proved, *cf.* E. Kroker, *Archiv. für Reformationsgeschichte*, xiv, 263 ff.; *ibid.*, various data on Tetzel's family in Pirna and Leipzig.

On August 30, 1513, the Margrave Albrecht von Brandenburg was appointed Archbishop of Magdeburg and shortly afterwards Administrator of the Bishopric of Halberstadt. The union of two bishoprics in the hands of one person was illegal. In addition, the twice-elected candidate was but twenty-three years old. He thus acquired a double dispensation from the Pope. Leo X, however, made no difficulties; on December 16, 1513, he confirmed the young Hohenzollern as Administrator of Magdeburg and Halberstadt. In return, Albert paid the legal fee of 1079 ducats (1 ducat = 9·4 marks of gold content = 1·4 fl. = at least 25 to 30 marks at the present value). The Fugger had hardly settled this piece of business when there opened to the fortunate Hohenzollern prince the prospect of a third bishopric: on March 9, 1514, he was elected Archbishop in Mainz also—"clearly by divine inspiration," as the Court of Berlin hastened to maintain. Now the Curia had indeed on occasion bestowed on one of its cardinals two or more bishoprics, but it was an unheard-of thing for a German prince, not yet of the legal age, to desire for himself three great and powerful bishoprics, which were also principalities of the Holy Roman Empire. Albrecht himself at first held back. All the more vigorously did his brother, the Elector Joachim of Brandenburg, bring influence to bear on the Curia from Berlin, through the medium of Dr. Blankenfeld. For the increase of power which Albrecht's good fortune promised the house of Brandenburg was of such importance that the Elector himself was interested in the successful outcome of the affair. Brandenburg would at once gain preponderance in North Germany over its old rival, the

Electorate of Saxony, and also prevent further extension of Saxony in Thuringia. The Curia resisted the plans and wishes of the two Hohenzollerns long and obstinately. But at last it allowed itself to be persuaded once more by a brilliant business offer: on the advice of an anonymous person, Albrecht offered the Pope, in addition to the legal fee of 12,300 ducats for confirmation as Archbishop of Mainz, a "composition" fee of 10,000 ducats if he would confirm him in all three bishoprics. The Pope soon agreed in principle to this proposition. The amount of the composition fee, however, was the subject of prolonged bargaining between the parties. The Curia demanded first 15,000 ducats; then 12,000—for twelve was the number of the Apostles; whereupon one of Albrecht's agents smartly replied that there were only seven capital sins. Finally, 10,000 was agreed to. In order, however, to strengthen the young prelate's ability to pay, which was not altogether free from doubt, Leo offered him also a jubilee indulgence celebrating the foundation of the Archbishopric of Mainz, on condition that he handed over half the proceeds to the Curia. Albrecht had naturally no objection to this. Thereupon he was at last, on August 18, 1514, confirmed as Archbishop of Mainz, Archbishop of Magdeburg, and Bishop of Halberstadt. A few months later, on March 31, 1515, the Pope announced the promised plenary indulgence for a period of eight years for the Archbishoprics of Mainz and Magdeburg and all the Brandenburg territories; the proceeds, according to the official statement, were to be expended solely on the construction of the dome of St. Peter's, but by the agreement of August 1514 one-half was secretly allotted in advance to the young Hohenzollern. The Curia had reason to be satisfied with this deal. It gained an immediate cash profit of about 23,379 ducats and had further assured to itself one-half of an indulgence which might be expected to be extremely lucrative. For all other indulgences, except a few in the hands of the Fugger, were suspended in the districts concerned—a thing which had never happened before—in favour of the new undertaking!

From 1514 onwards Luther had often expressed adverse opinions from the professorial chair as to the increasing number of indulgences, the shameless greed of the distributors and the blindness of the purchasers. But these were only passing critical observations. He never felt called upon to take up a definite stand in principle towards this institution of the Church until the spring of 1517, when the Dominican Johann Tetzel appeared in the Magdeburg district as announcer of the indulgence of Mainz, and "the people of Wittenberg ran like madmen to Jüterbog" to hear the "great clamourer" and obtain the extraordinary benefits of the new indulgence. For in Saxon territory the sale of it was forbidden. It even happened to Luther that some of those who habitually came to him for absolution, when he took them to task for their loose mode of life, simply showed him the letters of absolution obtained from the dealers in grace beyond the frontier, and politely requested him to absolve them without delay, notwithstanding the lack of moral earnestness which he perceived in them. Disconcerted at this, he asked himself: Does this abuse really express the law and doctrine of the Church? He set to work industriously in his cell to study the relevant literature, discussed the matter with those of his juristic colleagues who had some knowledge of it, and so came more and more to the conviction that the legal status and value of the indulgence were extremely weakly supported. Meanwhile, though he earned small thanks from Elector Friedrich, he had already begun his fight with the indulgence from the pulpit. But he was as yet only concerned with the spiritual care and instruction of the Wittenberg community. The idea of addressing these conclusions and criticisms to wider circles was still far from his mind. Then, perhaps not until October 1517, there fell into his hands—handsomely adorned with the arms of the Archbishop of Mainz—the "summary instruction to the sub-commissaries, penitentiaries and confessors" who were to effect the sale of the indulgence of Mainz. With amazement he read how the foremost prelate of Germany regarded his duties as chief pastor. Immediately his mind was made up: this book must go, and furthermore the Archbishop himself must at once suppress it and order a different form of sermon to his preachers of indulgences. To induce the Archbishop to do this, he collected the results he had arrived at during the last few months in his study of the indulgence in the form of theses, and added a series of arguments in criticism of the Mainz Instruction. He then had these Theses printed in the form of a broadsheet and sent them with a covering letter of admonition to the Archbishop's Councils at Calbe on the Saale. The broadsheet, however, he at first made public only by nailing it up on the notice-board of the University, the so-called thesis-door of the Castle Church. It can be seen clearly from this how little he intended the matter to be shouted from the housetops. He confidently hoped that his appeal to the Archbishop's conscience, or at least his indication as to the Pope's real intention, would not be in vain. For he was as certain that the good Leo X thought exactly as he did over the conduct of the preachers of indulgences as that he had the canon law on his side. Then why did he immediately give publicity to the matter? Not in order to arouse a scandal, but to avoid scandal—that was indeed, as he stated in his letter to Albrecht, the sole motive which guided him. The contents of the ninety-five Theses are entirely in accord with this motive. Nowhere do they call into question any formal dogma of the Church, nowhere do they betray, however faintly, any secret inclination on Luther's part to set himself up against the authority of the Pope. He wishes simply to make it clear what the indulgence is, according to the canon law—remission of the canonical penalties—and to utter a warning against overestimation and abuse of this institution of the Church. Little as he conceals his own slight opinion of such remissions of penance—for any man who genuinely feels himself guilty, in Luther's opinion, honestly *longs* for punishment, and will therefore accept the canonical penalties willingly and with joy, rather than seek to evade them—yet he does not therefore desire to abolish the indulgence or in any way quarrel with the Pope's right to issue indulgences. Nothing, it may be maintained, was further from his mind in the composition of this "Declaration on the Nature and Value of Indulgences" than the thought of demanding a reformation of the Church or renouncing his allegiance to that Church, which he still loved as a mother.

But in that case how did it come about that the Curia immediately instituted those famous proceedings against him which, after lasting more than three years, ended at last with the anathematisation of the new heretic and his outlawry by the Emperor and the Empire? He himself believed even in 1518 that he had to thank no one but Tetzel and Tetzel's fellows, the Dominicans. But Tetzel, in a letter to Miltitz of December 31, 1518, states most definitely that not he but Archbishop Albrecht had played the part of informer to the Curia.

Does this statement entirely convey the truth? Is the Hohenzollern prince, so highly esteemed as the patron of all ideals and endeavours in the realms of culture, alone responsible for this turn of affairs which so greatly surprised Luther and his friends?

Archbishop Albrecht was one of those comfortable worldlings who prefer if possible to avoid all responsible decisions. Therefore when, at his residence at Aschaffenburg, towards the middle of November, he at last received Luther's declaration, his first thought was how he could best get this unpleasant business off his hands as quickly as possible without actually going against his duties as a prelate. Those whom he consulted in the matter felt exactly as he did. The theologians and jurists of the University of Mainz declared frankly on December 17, after a lengthy deliberation, that they could find nothing to condemn in the ninety-five Theses, and therefore could not recommend him personally to take any further action in the affair. The councillors of the diocese of Mainz held that no exception could be taken on political grounds to legal proceedings against the Augustine monk, but they nevertheless advised him to leave the decision to his councillors at Halle (December 13). The Halle Council, however, understood so well Albrecht's hint that he was not at all anxious to "bring upon himself strife and enmity with the Augustinian Order," that they did not make use of the permission given them to empower Master Johann Tetzel to inhibit any further utterances by Luther on the question of indulgences through the ecclesiastical court (*processus inhibitorius*). The end of the story was, therefore, that Albrecht himself did nothing to help Tetzel against his opponent. But, precisely to avoid "bringing upon himself strife and enmity with the Augustinian Order," he had already before December 13 "referred the matter to His Holiness the Pope," and had the impudent monk denounced by his agent in Rome for the propagation of *new doctrines.* As proof he had appended all of Luther's writings that had come into his hands—the ninety-seven and the ninety-five Theses, the tract on the Penitential Psalms, and, apparently, even the "Brief Exposition of the Ten Commandments" of 1517. He had also taken care, however, that it should be realised in Rome how painful the whole affair was to him, and how much he feared the enmity of the Augustinians. Therefore, in February 1518, the Pope attempted first through the medium of the then General of the Augustinian Order, Gabriel della Volta, to "wean Brother Martin of his thirst for innovation and silence him." At the same time, however, he made efforts to draw the Elector of Saxony into his interest, by the bestowal of certain valuable privileges, which were quite irreconcilable with Luther's views and demands, on the All Saints' Church in Wittenberg. But his expectations were deceived. Before March was out Luther refused to make the recantation demanded of him by Staupitz at Volta's bidding, and the Elector not only did not abandon him, but secretly encouraged him in his resistance, by assuring him at this very moment of his especial protection. Indeed, he soon publicly took up the cause of the poisonous teacher of errors. When he learned that at Volta's wish the matter was to be discussed at the next chapter meeting of the German Augustinian Congregation, he declared that he would only let Brother Martin go to Heidelberg if Staupitz and the other heads of the Order would pledge themselves that the Chapter should not touch a hair of his *protégé's* head.[1] In consequence the Heidelberg meeting also ran its course without any critical episodes. Volta's severe accusation of the erring brother was indeed read, but the erring brother was, it seems, only directed to justify his standpoint in a detailed communication to the Pope. Thereupon on May 30 Luther sent to Rome, through Staupitz, his long-completed Resolutions on the ninety-five Theses. In his accompanying letter to the Pope he himself summarised the purport of his observations, briefly and conclusively, in the simple sentence: "I cannot recant." At that the proceedings caused by the denunciation of Mainz were really at an end, and it is probable that the Curia would hardly have resolved on further steps so soon, of Tetzel's fellow-Dominicans had not already seen to it that the affair should be carried further, and that in a far sharper tone.

At the end of January 1518 the Dominicans of the Saxon Province had already declared unanimously for Tetzel at a chapter meeting at Frankfort, and taken a resolution to denounce Luther in Rome, not for the propagation of new doctrines, but for *suspected heresy*. They flattered themselves with the most extravagant hopes for the success of this denunciation. The Pope was notoriously favourable to their Order, as was also his leading minister, Cardinal Medici (Clement VII). As for the cardinal's chief confidant, the Saxon monk Nikoläus von Schönberg, and the most influential theologian of the Curia, Cardinal Cajetan, they were themselves Dominicans. Thus, in their opinion, failure in Rome was impossible. Already, therefore, they threatened Luther openly at every opportunity with the stake, and his protector with the anathema of the Church. Luther did not make the mistake of treating these threats lightly. He already reckoned with the possibility of an unfavourable outcome. But he did not let himself be intimidated by the prospect for a moment. The Christian—so he declared on May 16 in a sermon on the validity of excommunication, which his opponents were soon employing against him all over Germany—can never be severed from Christ and from eternal blessedness by the anathema of the Church. Why, then, should he fear excommunication ?

---

[1] *Cf.* p. 110. Friedrich's attitude towards the Luther affair at first was entirely in accordance with the policy of his ancestors. The Margrave Wilhelm I and Friedrich the Quarrelsome had claimed of the Curia a *privilegium de non evocandis substitis*, by which Saxon subjects might not be cited before ecclesiastical courts abroad (Cod. dipl. Sax. II, 2 No. 757, 907), and Elector Ernst and Duke Albrecht had caused this privilege to be expressly confirmed, cf. *Beiträge zur sächsischen Kirchengeschichte*, xxiii, 41 f.

But the Dominicans had to be patient for some time yet. Not until, at the end of May, they had sent in a second denunciation containing new charges did the Pope, towards the middle of June, empower his Procurator-Fiscal, Mario de Perusco, to introduce a canonical lawsuit against Luther in the usual forms. At Perusco's suggestion he entrusted the preliminary examination to his Attorney-General, the Auditor-General Hieronymus Ghinucci, and the drawing up of the necessary theological justification to his official expert on religious matters, the *magister sacri palatii*, Prierias. Prierias, like all *magistri palatii*, was a Dominican, a strict Thomist and Curialist. He therefore fulfilled the task laid upon him with youthful ardour. Within three days he produced a statement in which he dealt with the new heretic in the most coarse and unskilful manner. He himself, however, was so proud of his effort that he immediately sent it out in print ; and it certainly made the desired impression at least on the delegated judge, Ghinucci. Early in July 1518, Ghinucci, acting in union with Prierias, issued a citation in the usual form summoning Luther to an audience in Rome. There, not later than sixty days after receipt of the citation, he was to answer before Perusco, Ghinucci, and Prierias to the charges of suspected heresy and subversion of the Papal authority. As a basis for these accusations the Papal Chancery appended the statement of Prierias. With this the heresy suit against Luther was formally instituted.

The citation reached Wittenberg on August 7. It seemed, therefore, that Luther had until the beginning of October in which to prepare his reply. But events occurred otherwise than he and his friends expected. It was only August 23 when the Pope ordered Cardinal Cajetan, who was at the time taking part in the Imperial Diet at Augsburg, to hear the monk of Wittenberg at once and, if he did not recant, to arrest him forthwith and have him brought to Rome; should he escape arrest, he was without more ado to be put under the Papal ban together with all his adherents and supporters. A second writ of the same day required the Elector of Saxony to hand over Luther, and a writ of August 25 from Volta, the High Master of the Augustinian Order, to the Provincial of Saxony, Gerhard Hecker, ordered, on pain of severe punishment, that the blind heretic be immediately imprisoned and chained hand and foot.

What had happened in the interval? By some underground methods which we do not know, the German Dominicans had procured notes of Luther's sermon of May 16 on the validity of excommunication. Out of this they had skilfully fabricated certain Latin theses on excommunication which they placed, together with a seditious poem of which Luther was not the author, in the hands of Cardinal Cajetan. From that time onwards the cardinal was firmly convinced that the Augustinian was a notorious heretic. This, according to canon law, completely changed the position of the lawsuit. The earlier proceedings ceased to be applicable to the case, and entirely new proceedings, based on the charge of *notorious* heresy, became inevitable. The only question was, how the steps necessary for this should now be taken. But on this question too Cajetan's mind was soon made up. He had noticed with satisfaction the sharp disagreement that had arisen between the Emperor Maximilian and the Elector of Saxony on the question of the coronation of Maximilian's grandson as King of Rome. He proceeded to use this antagonism very cleverly, inducing the irritated Emperor on August 5 to address to Rome a letter drafted by Cajetan himself, in which the Pope was requested to condemn Luther without delay, so that Maximilian on his side could proceed against the teacher of false doctrines—in other words, pronounce the imperial ban against him.

No doubt was felt in Rome that the new heretic could now be brought down in a very short time. He was therefore convicted *in contumaciam* of notorious heresy, and the necessary orders for arrest were issued. But everyone knew that these orders would be wholly ineffective if the Elector should refuse to deliver up his *protégé*. The Pope therefore determined on September 5 to confer the long-desired Golden Rose on the Elector, and certain very lucrative privileges concerning indulgence and absolution in the All Saints' Church in Wittenberg, which Saxon agents in Rome had made great efforts to obtain years ago. Thus he deliberately set out to bribe the Elector. A young relative of Father Schönberg, Karl von Miltitz, Titular Gentleman of the Papal Chamber, who for some years had been living in Rome as a notary without occupation, was selected to earn the rich gratuity always bestowed on such occasions, and on September 10 he was provided by His Holiness with the necessary instructions for his honourable mission. Then arrived a despatch from the Augsburg Diet which caused the Pope to restrain the young man's thirst for action a little longer. Cajetan announced that the Emperor had succeeded on August 27 in gaining the votes of no fewer than five Electors for his grandson Charles. Only one of the noble princes had not taken part in the affair—namely, the Elector of Saxony. Now as the election of Charles was altogether unacceptable to the Curia, and the help of Saxony could not be dispensed with in the matter of certain grants of money from the Reichstag, a matter very near the heart of the Holy Father, there was nothing for it but to retreat somewhat in the Luther affair and concentrate on a different position. For the Saxon prince naturally profited by the fortune of the moment to demand very notable concessions in this regrettable business. He required, first, that the false teacher should be tried in Augsburg; secondly, that he should be dealt with, not as a notorious heretic, but with kindness and fatherly clemency; thirdly, that he should not be compelled to recant; and fourthly, that he should afterwards be allowed to depart in peace. Probably the Pope was not altogether edified by this despatch. But he perceived that he must meet the Elector as far as possible. He directed Cajetan in this sense, about the middle of September, and gave him full powers, as judge-designate, to carry out the suit against Luther without delay. In consequence the meeting between Luther and Cajetan in Augsburg ran its course entirely as the Elector had desired: Luther was not to be moved to pronounce the six "harmless" letters *revoco*, and the Cardinal had no handle against him on that account. Nevertheless the hearing was not without bearing on the subsequent progress of the case.

From his conversation with Luther Cajetan gained the conviction that there was no adequate foundation for the condemnation of the heretic. He therefore urged the Curia to remedy this lack at once, and, in order to expedite the affair as much as possible, enclosed the draft of a declaration of dogma on the subject of the indulgence. Leo X immediately fell in with this suggestion. On November 9 in the decretal *Cum postquam*, he defined the dogma of the indulgence on the lines desired by Cajetan, threatened all representatives of divergent views with the great ban, and empowered the Cardinal to take action against all persons who should be guilty of such opinions, in accordance with his free judgment and irrespective of any supporters such persons might have. It was unfortunate, though, that the supporter in the particular case in point, namely the Elector of Saxony, should be so uncommonly cunning and skilled in the invention of new obstacles. Cajetan first tried threats. In a letter which reached the prince's residence about the middle of November, he adjured him by his princely honour and his duty as a Christian either to deliver Brother Martin over to Rome or to expel him from his territories, and, in conclusion, indicated with veiled words what lay before him if he should again say No. These threats did not fail to make an impression in Saxony, but more upon Luther than upon the Elector. Luther did not wish on any account to plunge his good master into misfortune. He therefore offered immediately, on his own initiative, to leave Saxony. The Elector regarded the situation far more calmly. He too, however, pondered for a time whether he would not be well advised to place this *protégé* who was so difficult to guide in some safer spot. But finally he resolved that Luther should stay, and politely but firmly rejected the Cardinal's demands (December 8).

By the time this happened Karl von Miltitz, the hopeful young diplomat, still thirsting for action, who was to tame the "Saxon fox" by the opposite method—by kindness—had already arrived in Germany. How well the Curia had prepared this attempt at bribery may be learnt from the fact that Miltitz was empowered to authorise the entry of two persons of illegitimate birth into the Church, and their eligibility for all Papal offices and honours. For whom, in all probability, was this concession intended? For Friedrich's two illegitimate sons, to whom he was much devoted, and whom he could very easily in this way have provided for with rich ecclesiastical benefices. But well as the Curia had arranged the affair, no less badly did the worthy Titular Gentleman of the Chamber perform the task, really not very difficult, which his kindly uncle in Rome had procured him in consideration of his pitiable financial state. His instruction expressly and most strictly bound him to Cajetan's directions, his function being merely, like a kind of superior huntsman, to drive the noble quarry towards the Cardinal. But he soon recognised that by doing so he would make himself extremely unpopular in Germany, and so, in a light-hearted and venturous spirit, he exchanged the ill-starred rôle of policeman for the far more flattering one of generous mediator. But why was it that the Curia did not immediately recall him, but at first let him continue on his own lines? No doubt the Curia itself was at the beginning not able to distinguish clearly what was true and what was false in the elaborations of this vain chatterer. For much that Miltitz brought forward was indeed not altogether without point—as, for instance, his argument that the Luther affair would never have become such a great matter of state had it not been for the detestable and dishonest machinations of the Dominicans. So the Curia too thought it not impossible that Luther, if properly handled, might find himself ready to recant of his own free will, and in consequence suddenly began to treat the notorious heretic, upon whom in all probability the great anathema of the Church had already been pronounced in due legal form, as a first-class good Christian; on March 29, 1519, the Pope, in a personal letter, couched in the most affectionate terms, invited his "beloved son" to Rome, and even offered most kindly to make good the not inconsiderable expense of the journey.

But such unconditional credence would not have been given to Miltitz if the Curia had not been so entirely taken up with another matter. On January 12 the Emperor Maximilian had died. Charles of Spain and Francis I of France were rivals for the succession to the Empire. But at bottom one was as unwelcome to the Pope as the other. Therefore, he very soon, at the end of January, set his mind upon the candidature of the Elector of Saxony. But, unfortunately, the Elector had absolutely no ambition to become Emperor. No methods, then, could be left untried to make him amenable to the wishes of Rome. And, indeed, no methods were left untried. Finally, on June 7, 1519, the prospect was held out to him of elevating a certain "friend," namely, Luther, to the cardinalate,[1] and the Curia further declared itself ready to invest the "friend" with a rich archbishopric! But, before many weeks were out, all the hopes of the Curia were foiled. On June 28, Charles of Spain was elected Emperor, and in July, at the Leipzig Disputation, Luther formally declared war on the Papacy. After this there could be no further illusions in Rome as to the random and unstable swindling policy of Miltitz. It was decided to reopen the lawsuit. But first one more attempt was made, through Miltitz, to browbeat the Elector of Saxony, by threatening him openly with the interdict if he would not withdraw his support from Luther. This threat did not have the success hoped for. The prince, usually so timid, answered in a very detailed memorial, quite politely, that the Curia was not entitled to place his professor under excommunication or his country under an interdict until after the attempt at mediation by the Archbishop of Trier which Miltitz, in direct opposition to his instructions, had meanwhile taken it upon himself to arrange. This memorial acted in Rome like a declaration of war. Promptly, on January 9, 1520, an Italian member of the Curia replied to it in the Papal Consistory with a thundering speech which proved that the abusive style of the time was as well understood in Rome as elsewhere. The old Elector, who had ever so readily "given way and effaced himself and endured so much merely for the sake of peace," was there depicted in the blackest colours as a cruel, raging tyrant, the hangman of the clergy and indeed of the whole Christian religion, and finally described as the twin head of the hideous Lutheran hydra. In conclusion, the speaker urged the Pope at last to deal out to the two heretics the punishment they had so long deserved—that is, to institute canonical proceedings against both Luther and the Elector for heresy. The prudent Medici naturally did not think it advisable to serve the "Saxon fox" immediately with the *ultima ratio paparum.* He contented himself at first with forming a commission of the Generals and Procurators of the Mendicant Orders, with a few cardinals, to prepare a Bull of excommunication against

---

[1] On November 12, 1538 (1539 by the *calculus Pisani*) Cardinal Giovanni Salviati wrote to Cardinal Benedetto Accolti from Torchiara that he had heard from a well-informed personage in Rome that at the next creation of cardinals Luther was to receive the purple. This creation took place on November 20, 1538, *cf.* Pastor, *Geschichte der Päpste*, v, 129. To make Luther a cardinal was, of course, never the intention of Paul III. Salviati's story is a mere rumour, only of interest as showing how much the anti-reform party in Rome and in the College of Cardinals were ready to believe of the pro-reform party under Gasparo Contarini, *cf.* the letter in *Lutherstudien*, pp. 284 f.

Dr. Martinus. The members of the commission were for the most part men completely unlearned in theology. They therefore did not attempt any thorough discussion of the accusatory matter laid before them. They simply took the articles objected to one by one and straightway condemned them. In this way they certainly went forward at a great speed; but one of the members became more and more uneasy at this alarmingly rapid rate of progress. This was Cardinal Cajetan. He was probably at this time the only man in Rome who had complete command of the material and was entirely aware how debatable many of the questions raised by Luther were. Moreover, he had never shared the extreme views of Tetzel and the German Dominicans; and, what was almost more important still, he alone of the Roman inquisitors was acquainted with Luther personally, and was sufficiently well informed as to conditions in Germany to be able to judge in some degree what impression such precipitate methods would make beyond the Alps. We are not told how he brought his apprehensions to the knowledge of the Pope. We only know that on February 11 the Pope set up a new commission, which in practice worked entirely according to the directions of the learned Cardinal. This is shown in the extremely surprising resolutions at which the second commission arrived during the following weeks. Before the middle of March it drew up proposals to condemn only a part of Luther's Theses as definitely heretical, merely branding the others as scandalous, or false, or "offensive to pious ears" or contrary to Catholic truth; also to announce this decision first in the form of a decretal, without mentioning Luther's name; lastly, by means of a Papal brief, to call on the accused once more to recant. The Pope at first agreed to these suggestions. He at once ordered Volta, the High Master of the Augustinians, to transmit to Luther, through Staupitz, another injunction to recant. But when Volta wrote this hortatory letter (March 15) the man was already on the way to Rome who was soon to thwart all Cajetan's endeavours towards a decent mode of warfare against the new heretic—Dr. Johann

Eck from Ingolstadt. Before March was out this most unscrupulous of all inquisitors had succeeded in overthrowing Cajetan's proposals and inducing the Pope to form a third commission in which he, Eck, set the key. This commission consisted of only four persons: Eck, Cajetan, Cardinal Accolti, and one Dr. Johannes Hispanus, otherwise unknown. The terms of reference of the commission ran simply: to draw up a Bull of excommunication against Luther. Eck's influence announced itself above all in the fact that the commission added to the doctrines objected to by the Dominicans of Cologne and Louvain and by Cardinal Adrian of Utrecht, which formed the reformer's debit account, a series of further articles newly presented by himself. By May 2 the commission was so far advanced that the Ingolstadt professor was able to lay the draft of the Bull before the Pope, then at his pleasure castle at Magliana, where, mounted on horseback, he enjoyed watching the wild activities of boar-hunting; it began, quite in harmony with the spirit of the place, with the fine invocation: "Arise, O Lord . . . a wild pig seeks to lay waste Thy vineyard." Not until nearly three weeks later, on May 21, 23 and 25, was the document debated, as was customary, by the cardinals in the Consistory. As to the reprehensibility of the forty-one Articles extracted from Luther's works by the commission, the Sacred College was of one opinion. The remaining sections of the Bull, composed by the jurist Accolti, were also for the most part allowed to pass without adverse comment. Only against the statement that the appeal to the General Council was the rankest piece of heresy which Luther had committed, were vigorous objections raised by one of their Eminences, the old and learned Spaniard, Bernardino Carvajal. But the College simply passed over this protest and proceeded to the order of the day. The only points on which the discussion appears to have spun itself out to any length were the questions whether all the heretic's writings should be condemned to the flames, or only those in which one of the forty-one evil Articles appeared; also whether, as Cajetan recommended, the exact degree of reprehensibility should be indicated in the case of each Article ; and, lastly, whether the heretic should be summoned to appear once more, as Accolti wished, or should at once, as Pucci proposed, be solemnly cursed. But finally, on June 1, the Bull was accepted by the Consistory apparently without alteration, and it was then made out in the Chancery, in due form, on the 15th.

Thus the Curia had spent four whole months on the case of Dr. Martinus. What had emerged from all its efforts ? Superficially regarded, a great deal : a document which in scope, verbosity and unction surpasses almost every product of its kind which the fecund curial style brought forth in those loquacious days. But is this most famous product of the famous jurist Accolti equally a masterpiece in substance ? If we listen to the most industrious of the several dozen midwives who assisted at the difficult birth of this child of Rome—Dr. Eck—we are compelled to answer in the negative. Eck admits three years later that the Bull has completely failed in its object. He says that many of the Articles condemned are so obscure and some so absolutely indifferent that even the most learned were at a loss to understand why exception should be taken to them. Still more serious does it seem to him that the Curia condemned these Articles without, even in brief terms, justifying its verdict, and justifying it by quotation from the Bible ; "for everyone now demands to hear the whole of Holy Writ. Therefore all announcements of the Pope's must have a smack of the Bible about them, ay, and of the Holy Ghost." Indeed, the Bull does not fulfil the most ordinary requirements which one is entitled to set such documents. The condemned Articles are most unskilfully chosen, often quite incomprehensible without annotation, and sometimes so maliciously formulated that Luther was able to maintain at once that he had never taught any such thing. But the gravest thing of all is that the spiritual judges of Rome entirely forgot what were precisely Luther's principal "errors"—his new doctrines of faith, justification, sacraments and the Church. And why? Because they had not put themselves to the trouble of reading the heretic's works themselves, and had all, even Eck and Cajetan, contented themselves with choosing the finest parts of the extracts made by Dominicans of Cologne and Louvain and the minutes of the Leipzig Disputation. Even their contemporaries judged, therefore, that the Curia by this production had given evidence of its intellectual poverty. But it would have had difficulty at that time in accomplishing anything better. For the Curia was then poor indeed, not only in the Holy Spirit, but in spirit of any kind. Those few of its members who had any pretentions to intellect were "poets," *i.e.* humanists, or jurists. Theologians, in the Rome of Leo's day, were rarer and far less respected than astrologers, and of the few supposedly distinguished scholars in the things of God, among whom Eck in his innocence reckoned the Pope himself, there was only one man of genuine erudition—Cajetan. And this single really learned man, who alone had some notion of the scope of the resolutions which the ever-cheerful Medici was now announcing *urbi et orbi*, was brutally thrust aside just at the decisive moment by the noisy ranter Eck, whose prodigious thirst gave rise to so many spiteful observations among the slandermongers of the Vatican. However, we are here principally interested in the Bull, not as an example of the state of intellectual culture in Medicean Rome, but as an event in the world's history—that is, by reason of the terms in which those questions of law, still energetically debated in the Consistory up to the very end of May, were definitely decided. How, then, does the Bull express itself on these questions? First, it condemns Luther's celebrated Forty-one Articles, but without making known the degree of reprehensibility of each one, as Cajetan had so urgently wished. Further, in one place it condemns only a part of Luther's writings, but another passage assigns them all indifferently to the flames. Lastly, Luther and his adherents are threatened with the great ban. It is open to them all for sixty days, reckoned from the day of publication of the Bull in Rome and in the bishoprics of Brandenburg, Meissen, and Merseburg, to revoke their errors. Is not this striking, is it not indeed a truly noble example of true apostolic clemency and patience? No; it is nothing more than a legal formality, known as the "evangelical admonition," which certainly might in this case have been omitted, since Luther's heresy was proved notorious, but which was purposely not omitted, so that eventually, when the time came to administer punishment, the "stiff-necked obstinacy" of the heretic might also be duly taken into account. There is, in fact, nothing in any way striking, or even unusual, in this most famous of all prosecutions for heresy, not even the strange interweaving of ecclesiastical and purely secular political interests which during its course was so evident in the dealings of the Curia. For this combination was a universal characteristic of the Papal government of the Church at that period. The only point which may be considered remarkable is the large part which the Dominicans played throughout the case. It was they who in the first place set the proceedings in motion. It was they who provided the theological referee whose statement of justification was followed by the citation of July 1518. Their unwearied intrigues then brought it about that on August 23 proceedings were opened against Luther on the charge of notorious heresy, and that the suit was taken up again in 1520 after the Medici, completely blameless of theology, had made his excursion into politics during the struggle for election to the Imperial throne. Their influence was predominant in the Commissions which prepared the verdict, and finally supplied the greater part of the accusatory material employed in the Bull. It may be said, therefore, that Tetzel's order left nothing undone in their efforts to avenge him. It was the greatest pity that the mundane Pope, through his ineradicable tendency to steer by two compasses at once, irrevocably let slip the best time for action. If, as they so pressingly urged upon him, he had carried the case straight through to its end in the autumn of 1518, the arch-heretic would probably, with the help of the pious Emperor Maximilian, have been burnt. But now this aim which they had pursued with such fervent zeal was far harder to attain. For in the meantime the detested monk had won such a powerful following that it was no longer possible to have him seized, bound and executed without stirring the "German beasts" to a fury. This fact was promptly shown at the first attempts made beyond the Alps to publish and carry out the verdict.

Fully recognising the seriousness of the situation, the Curia had determined to commission two Papal nuncios extraordinary to Germany expressly for this purpose. Eck and Aleander were appointed. Eck was to carry out the main attack against Luther. But he did not even succeed immediately in putting through the publication of the Bull in the bishoprics of Meissen, Merseburg, and Naumburg, and the Universities of Leipzig and Erfurt. Electoral Saxony he did not venture to enter at all. His colleague Aleander, the former Papal librarian, was more fortunate. His principal task, in accordance with Eck's advice, was to induce the young Emperor to issue a series of mandates, legal ordinances against heresy, and also, in order to rob the evangelical movement of its strongest weapon, a severe Press law, under colour of the resolutions passed by the last Lateran Council. The Emperor acceded to these wishes at once. On September 28, at Antwerp, he signed an anti-Lutheran edict for his hereditary lands. Before October was out, Aleander was able to submit to him, at Aix-la-Chapelle, the draft of a law for the German Empire, in which the Imperial State required that Luther and his followers should be handed over or expelled, that all Lutheran literature should be burnt and an ecclesiastical censorship of books set up. But this draft, in which the nuncio had in the main adhered verbally to his instructions, was rejected by the Imperial Council, and the Antwerp edict remained for the time unpublished. All that the shrewd Italian at present achieved was a succession of bloodless *autos-da-fé* directed against Luther's books. These, too, were mostly foiled of their object at the last minute by the intervention of ill-behaved students. Even at Louvain, where the whole Court—with the exception, however, of the Emperor—had appeared at the edifying spectacle, these frolicsome Lutherans brought it about on October 5 that the volumes publicly and solemnly burnt by the hangman consisted far more of scholastic tomes and books of sermons than of Luther's writings. At Cologne, on November 12, they brought as burnt-offerings only a bundle of waste paper, and at Mainz on the 22nd nothing but an imposing heap of anti-Lutheran books. But in Saxony people knew nothing of this secret joke, and consequently they ascribed to the Cologne *auto-da-fé* in particular, which had taken place immediately after the Emperor's departure, a significance which in fact it did not possess. So when the news got abroad that a similar pious spectacle was planned in Leipzig, Luther at last resolved, in agreement with the whole University and with the Elector's knowledge, as he had already announced on July 9, to pay the Curia in its own coin. He first intended to use the pulpit of the parish church for his purpose. But finally his University colleagues took the affair in hand and made it into a kind of academic festival, to which Melancthon, as was customary, invited the young students by putting up a public notice on the door of the parish church, in the early hours of December 10. Thus the gathering before the Elster Gate consisted almost wholly of professors and students when at 9 o'clock Luther, "trembling and praying," stepped up to the heap of faggots and, after Melancthon had set it alight, threw into the flames, apparently in silence, "the Pope's Bible and Koran"—*i.e.* the books of ecclesiastical law and various other godless works. Therefore he spoke the few words with which he then committed the Bull of the Antichrist to the fire in Latin only: "*Quoniam tu conturbasti veritatem Dei, conturbet te hodie Dominus in ignem istum*" ("Because thou hast destroyed God's truth, may the Lord to-day destroy thee in this fire"), and then, after the whole assembly had responded with a solemn "Amen," he returned into the town at once with the professors; so little intention had he of giving any dramatic flavour to this, the only event of his life which has struck a sober posterity as somewhat theatrical. To him the whole "spectacle," produced as it was without the display of ceremonious execution and solemn speeches usual on such occasions, and performed in the space of a few minutes, was no mere spectacle, and no mere academic jest designed to "restore their good humour to the students, disturbed by the expulsion of about 150 of their fellows," but simply the inevitable answer to the *autos-da-fé* in Louvain and Cologne. That the Papists could never forgive him this stroke was perfectly clear to him from the beginning, for the realisation was sufficiently forced upon him at once by the horror with which the Dean of the Law Faculty, Henning Göde, a man otherwise very well disposed towards him, received the news of the burning of the Papal law-books. But for that very reason he was "gladder over this deed, once he had ventured it, than over any deed of his life." The impression produced by the "mighty event" upon his contemporaries is quite in agreement with this. Not one of them saw in it a mere spectacle. All who express their opinions give utterance to the feeling that Brother Martin had dared an enormous thing. And in what did they perceive this enormity? Not in the burning of the Bull, but, like Luther himself, in the burning of the Koran of Antichrist, the Papal law-books. The same unanimity characterises the general judgment of the effect this "mighty event" made upon the masses. Even Luther's opponents did not conceal that he had thereby powerfully strengthened his adherents, and wholly annulled the impression made by Aleander's laborious executions. How could it have been otherwise? Not everyone could read and understand his books. But the beacon at the Elster Gate was seen throughout the Western world, and even the "plain, common folk" could at once grasp its meaning and interpret it rightly.

Meanwhile the Elector Friedrich had long ago taken all measures to guard his *protégé* against the terrible fate allotted him by the Pope. There were three points of which he could always make skilful use: first, the clause introduced by himself into the election capitulation of Charles V (July 3, 1519), to the effect that the Emperor could not place any subject under the imperial ban without trial, save by consent of the Estates of the Empire; second, Luther's frequently repeated assurance that he was ready at any time to allow any irreproachable judges to "teach him a better lesson," provided it were taken from the Bible; third, the submission of Luther's case to the judgment of Friedrich's friend, the Archbishop-Elector of Trier, which he had induced Miltitz to arrange on his own authority, but which had never been sanctioned by Curia. This last point he had already employed against the Curia in December 1519, both as an excuse against the reproach of un-Catholic principles and as a protest against the procedure favoured in Rome in the Luther affair. When the Curia, with Cardinal Riario as intermediary, once more urgently bade him withdraw his support from the heretic, he justified his refusal, in his reply of July 10, 1520, not only by this somewhat worn-out excuse and protest, but also by Luther's offer, now brought into the field for the first time; he omitted to mention, however, that Luther would accept his lesson solely and exclusively from the Bible—an omission which can hardly have been quite unintentional. He did not, of course, imagine that this would accomplish anything positive in Rome. The most that could result was that Rome would be sufficiently impressed not to pester him further with such demands. But he may have hoped in this way to prevent the execution of the Papal verdict in Germany, by bringing to bear the argument that the Luther dispute could only be settled without damage to the interests of the Empire if, as imperial law demanded, Dr. Martinus were tried in Germany by impartial judges and, in accordance with his wishes, refuted by the evidence of the Bible. It did not, however, seem advisable to him to approach the authoritative parties with these proposals himself; that should rather be left to Dr. Martinus. Thus he would be able (and this would be to Luther's best advantage) to continue peacefully in the rôle of benevolent neutral which he had first undertaken, and which was so congenial to his natural tendencies. Therefore he persuaded Luther, at the end of August 1520, once more to put down his frequently repeated *Erbieten* in black and white, in a letter to the Emperor and in a pamphlet, so clearly and conclusively that it could no longer be disregarded, nor yet be revoked by Luther himself. For the excellent Doctor "was even then very difficult to lead and guide," and at all events it could do no harm, if, without altogether realising what his good master had in mind, he were made to tie a leading-string about his own neck.

To what use did the Elector now put this document, carefully looked through by his secretary Spalatin and amended to suit his taste? First, he had it printed as a broadsheet and posted up publicly in Worms at the end of October, during the Imperial Diet. Then, on November 1, he applied for an audience with the Emperor, and made such urgent demonstration to the young monarch of the purport of the *Erbieten* and the stipulations of the election capitulation, that Charles at last agreed "to grant the monk the lawful course *to which he offered himself*, and not to condemn him untried." But this oral consent was not of much practical use. Therefore, the Elector now hid behind a disciple of Erasmus, Count Heinrich von Nassau, who had great influence at Court, and the Emperor's tutor, M. de Chièvres, and asked them to carry the matter further. Both willingly did him this service, the Count out of friendship, Chièvres out of political calculation. So he arrived, as it seemed, with unhoped-for speed at his goal. On November 28 the Emperor wrote bidding him bring Luther with him to the next Imperial Diet at Worms. There His Majesty would cause him to be tried by learned and eminent persons, and would see to it that no injustice nor anything contrary to the law should happen to him. A less cautious politician would have accepted this attractive proposal at once. But Friedrich rejected it. Why? The reason he gave was that Luther's writings had been burnt, contrary to his humble request, without having been refuted by evidence from Holy Writ. But that was probably only a pretext. Probably he feared both for his own and for Luther's safety, if the reformer came to Worms without the express command of the Emperor. For what might not befall Luther on the journey, and in Worms itself, without his princely protector being able to do anything for him? Only if the Emperor himself cited him to appear, and pledged himself for his safety, were such unpleasant surprises out of the question. It is characteristic of Friedrich that on his arrival at Worms, in spite of the Emperor's well-known views, he immediately took up this apparently quite hopeless project again. With indefatigable zeal he strove to carry it through, in defiance of all obstacles, bringing forward again the old excuses and protests with which he had already held Luther's adversaries at bay for so long: the conditions of the capitulation of July 3, 1519, the submission of the case to the Commissorium of the Archbishop of Trier, and above all Luther's *Erbieten*, the fundamental idea of which had, to his great satisfaction, been accepted by the celebrated Erasmus on November 5, 1520, and by many other people since, with such joy that he might well hope it would achieve something in Worms. This time, however, he had no luck with the Emperor and the Imperial Councillors. They did not indeed refuse outright; rather did they make an appearance of meeting him half-way, but only in order to dissuade him from his plan of settling Luther's case at the Diet. With this intention they transmitted to him, through the Emperor's confessor, Jean Glapion, a proposal that Luther should treat with a number of impartial, learned and pious persons elsewhere concerning his errors, a long list of which Glapion sent to Wittenberg through the medium of the Saxon Chancellor Brück; meanwhile, he was to refrain from further writing and to withdraw the books he had already published. But the "Saxon fox" was not to be caught, nor a recantation extracted from Luther, so easily as that. The only result of this intrigue was that Friedrich now tried to accomplish his aim in opposition to the Emperor and with the help of the Imperial Estates. And the Estates did indeed agree to his plans, despite the vigorous counter-activities of the Papal nuncio Aleander. On February 19, 1521, they determined, having regard to Luther's famous offer, to petition the Emperor to summon Luther to Worms with a safe-conduct for the journey there and back. The Emperor was not in a position simply to reject this most unwelcome "admonition." On March 2, whether he would or not, he had to declare himself in agreement with the principle of summoning Luther. But he half withdrew this consent immediately, by ordering Friedrich to transmit the citation to the heretic. He hoped, as the Lutherans thought, that Luther would then not have the courage to appear before the Diet. But Friedrich was far too clever to accept this. He refused this ostensibly most honourable task. The Emperor then had no alternative but to carry out the decision of the Diet; on March 11 he signed the citation himself and sent it by an imperial herald to Luther.[1] He had, however, by no means given up hopes of preventing Luther's coming. On March 10, not without consulting the Diet, but against their expressly stated wishes, he had issued what was known as a sequestration mandate. This stated that the Emperor and the Empire were unanimously resolved to admit no innovations into their holy faith. Luther was merely to be asked at the Diet whether or not he would recant. Should he persist in his errors, he would be dealt with as was fitting, according to the custom of the Holy See. His books, however, were to be handed over to the authorities at once throughout the Empire. No similar works were to be printed in future, and no one was to profess these opinions. What did the Emperor intend with this *tour de force* ? He wished to intimidate Luther so that he would not appear in answer to the citation, whereupon Charles could proceed against him as a "disobedient absentee"; and at the same time so to alarm the Elector that he would not let the reformer go to Worms. The Elector was indeed impressed quite as he desired. Friedrich now was at a loss whether, in these circumstances, he should still advise Luther to visit Worms. In any case he sent Spalatin to Frankfort post haste, to warn him that if he still wished to come he must do so entirely at his own risk and on his own responsibility. Luther, too, when during his journey he received the imperial mandate, was at first "mightily alarmed." But fear of human beings was a feeling which had no place in his soul. Therefore, neither this brutal attempt at intimidation, nor the timorous comments of his well-meaning lord, nor the severe physical suffering which afflicted him on the journey, were able to drive him back; he proceeded resolutely on his way—"defying all the gates of Hell and all the powers of the air." The Papal party were at first thunderstruck at this unexpected news. But they quickly pulled themselves together for a last attempt to snatch away the dreaded monk under the very walls

---

[1] The citation was drawn up provisionally in the Chancery as early as March 6, 1521. This draft must, however, by the evidence of Aleander, who had it shown to him, have read quite differently from the fair copy which we now possess. During the following days the Emperor tried to induce the Elector to undertake the delivery of the citation to Luther. But the Elector would not agree. On the contrary, supported by his powerful following among the Estates, he compelled the Emperor—probably on March 10—to issue the citation to Luther himself, further, not to send it by an ordinary courier but by an Imperial herald, and finally to give the text of the document its present form, which in the address follows the style of the Saxon Chancery. The Emperor avenged himself on March 10 by issuing the sequestration mandate. What conclusions the Elector drew from the Emperor's preliminary refusal are shown by the words (afterwards expunged) of his draft letter to Luther of March 11: "Have good care for yourself on the way as regards eating and drinking at inns, and everywhere else"; *cf.* Corr., iii, 110. Luther preserved the citation carefully in a chest. This chest, when the inheritance was divided (April 5, 1554), came with the papers contained in it, into the possession of Luther's youngest daughter, Margarethe von Kunheim; it afterwards left the von Kunheim family and came into the hands of the Counts of Wallenrodt. The document thus reached the Wallenrodt Library, and was incorporated with this into the Königsberg Library, *cf.* the publication of Ernst Kroker appearing shortly after the present volume. The second alleged original of the citation in the Leipzig Municipal Library is in my opinion not a draft but a forgery. It betrays itself by the mere fact that the originator has taken the trouble to imitate the Emperor's signature,

but only his, omitting those of the Archbishop of Mainz and the Chancellor Nikolaus Ziegler, and, obviously to strengthen the impression of authenticity has provided the document with a seal, whereas the undoubtedly genuine Königsberg document has none.

of Worms. The Emperor's confessor had succeeded at the beginning of April during personal discussions at the Ebernburg, in winning over Sickingen and Hutten to the side of the Emperor, and, at the same time so completely deceiving them by his apparently sincere interest in the noble spirit of the reformer that they were convinced that his whole thought and endeavour were set on the best means of defending Luther. It was therefore no difficult matter for him to persuade the two knights and even the acute little Alsatian, Martin Bucer, who was then in Sickingen's service as chaplain, that to enable him to do something for Luther, it was indispensable that the reformer, before his arrival in Worms, should secretly take counsel with him at the Ebernburg concerning the measures necessary for the reform of the Church. If Luther agreed to this it would be easy enough to keep him at the Ebernburg until the imperial safe-conduct had expired, and it was out of the question for him to continue his journey to Worms. The plan was very neat. But Bucer did not keep close counsel. He let the secret out in Worms, and so it came to the ears of the Elector and the Saxon councillors, who for long enough had trusted the imperial confessor no farther than they could see him. They suspected the deceit and apparently sent Luther speedy warning of Glapion's machinations. Consequently, when Bucer appeared before the reformer at Oppenheim on April 15, inviting him on behalf of Sickingen and Hutten to the Ebernburg, which lay only a few hours' journey to the west, he did not accept the suspicious proposal, but went straight on his way on the 16th. At 10 o'clock in the morning, "contrary to all expectations," and to the great rage and horror of his adversaries and the evident rejoicing of all "who loved to see God's truth upheld," he arrived in Worms.

The Papal nuncio Aleander was at first beside himself at this "evil outcome of the affair." But he soon regained his composure. Though he had unfortunately not been able to prevent the coming of the "great master-heretic," he could perhaps bring it about that the dreaded hearing should be rushed through as quickly as possible and the "rascal" should then disappear from Worms at the earliest moment. To this end it was necessary, above all, to avoid any attempt to teach the "Antichrist" a better lesson from the Holy Scripture, as he and his protector wished. For otherwise they would inevitably come to a formal disputation with the "reprobate" whose end could not be foreseen. Also they must overthrow the Diet's decision to require of the "rogue" only a recantation of his undoubtedly heretical articles, and to "hear him further" concerning these articles against the Papal supremacy and the abuses in the Papal government of the Church. For if the Diet entered upon a formal discussion with the "beast" on this matter, all was lost for Rome. To ward off in advance any possibility of these most undesired consequences, the nuncio, in conjunction with the old intriguer Glapion, at once drew up an exact programme for the hearing of Luther. He was only to be asked whether he recognised as his own the twenty books which Aleander had laid before the Emperor by way of proof, and whether he would revoke them. It can hardly have been without *arrière-pensée* that they chose as the place of the audience the low court-room of the Episcopal court, which would contain only a few people. For in this way the great event, awaited with feverish excitement by the whole of Germany, took place practically with the exclusion of the public. But if the hearing (April 17) went off "not altogether badly," it did not go off quite so well as the nuncio hoped. Instead of simply answering Yes or No, Luther asked for time to reflect—a thing which none of his opponents had expected. Why was this? Did he really need to reflect at this stage of events whether or not he could recant? No! For that same evening he wrote to Vienna: "Not a single letter will I revoke." No doubt he only wished to assure himself of the possibility of continuing the proceedings under conditions more favourable to him. The only question is whether he determined on this course quite on his own initiative, or whether his princely protector was responsible for it. For it goes without saying that the extremely prudent Elector did not withhold his counsel at this hour, which for him, too, was highly critical. Luther, however, only tells us in later years that he was persuaded not to attack the Diet like a wrathful Elijah. We must therefore at present let this much-discussed question rest unsolved. What now were the consequences of the reformer's temporising? In the first place, Aleander and the Emperor could not now treat his case entirely according to their good pleasure. In the second place, the Estates now had time and opportunity to intervene. This they certainly did. There is no doubt that Luther owed it to them, not to the Emperor, that the desired time for reflection was granted him. The Emperor's influence at most betrayed itself in the fact that Luther, contrary to his expectations, received only one day's respite, and was expressly forbidden to read his reply to Aleander's as yet unanswered question—which of course did not prevent him from preparing it in writing most carefully. It is probably also to be ascribed to the Estates, and not to the Emperor, that for the second hearing the great hall of the Episcopal court was designated, in which many more people could be accommodated. Thus the second audience opened, at 6 o'clock on the evening of April 18, under conditions more favourable to the reformer. How it ran its course is known to everyone. It need only be pointed out that the reformer, in his great speech, made skilful use of an idea which Erasmus of Rotterdam had employed with success at Cologne in the autumn of 1520 against the Elector and probably against the Emperor too; that in accordance with the principle ever upheld by the Diet, that "debate in Germany must be in the German tongue," he spoke first in German and then in Latin; and that both in his great speech and in his even more famous short reply he said exactly what his offer of August 1520 must have led people to expect of him. But he declared himself ready as before to let *anyone* teach him a better lesson from Holy Scripture. With this he carried off the victory, not only morally, but tactically. For after this declaration, which he soon published in print, the German princes at least, who knew the state of feeling among the masses, were not in a position to place him under the ban, that is to condemn him to death, without more ado. Willingly or unwillingly they must agree to further negotiations with him, and at least make an attempt to induce him to "let the Bible out of his fist." But partly, also, they did not want to let slip the unique opportunity of using this man of the people, so much feared by the Curia and the bishops, to obtain the abolition of abuses in the Papal administration of the Church which were intolerable to them all, and which they had collected in a long list of *gravamina*. Thus there ensued Luther's special negotiations, completely unknown to popular tradition, first with a committee of the Diet on April 24, and then with Vehus, the Chancellor of Baden, and Dr. Konrad Peutinger, the Augsburg envoy, on the 25th, in which the final decision was first reached. The subject of discussion was primarily his *Erbieten*. That Luther should give up the principle expressed in this of accepting a "better lesson" only on evidence of the Bible—to this sole aim all the arts of persuasion were now devoted. But he could not be persuaded. He maintained his victory, moral and tactical, through this last and hardest passage of arms. For if the Diet could not treat with him any further, it was also no more able than before to make a martyr of him without involving the Empire in the most difficult complications. As things then were in Germany, nothing was left for the "Holy Empire" but to follow the advice of the invincible Doctor, and, as actually happened in the following years, to remain absolutely neutral in the religious question.

But this realisation was beyond the reach of the young Emperor, who spoke only French and as yet knew nothing at all of German conditions, and of his advisers, also inadequately instructed and one and all hailing from abroad. They lent an ear all too willingly to the whispers of the Papal nuncio, who, in spite of all he had seen and experienced in Germany, was still of opinion that the Protestant movement could be exorcised by the obsolete methods of the mediaeval heresy laws—in other words, stifled with blood and fire. They now commissioned the over-zealous Italian, who had already vainly laid drafts of an imperial law against Luther twice before the Emperor and twice before the Diet, with the task of definitely working out such a law. Thus did the famous Edict of Worms of May 26, 1521, come into being. Its first part sentences Luther and his adherents to the ban, involving the death penalty, confiscation of all movable and immovable goods, and loss of all regalia, fiefs, liberties and franchises. At the head of these sanguinary clauses stands the conscious lie which avers that they have been resolved upon with undivided will, *i.e.* with the unanimous agreement of the Imperial Estates here assembled. A Draconian press law follows, with detailed directions on the administration of the censorship. This too begins with the statement that the law is issued by the will and advice of the Estates. The lie is here even more impudent than the like statement in the first part. For such a law had never even been *submitted* to the Diet. The edict was thus an exceptional law, thrust upon the Empire behind its back by the dishonest methods of the Italian nuncio, who was better versed in Ovid's *Ars Amatorium* (thanks to industrious practical exercise therein) than in the Bible, and of the ill-advised foreigner who bore the title of German King. One result of this fact was that the law could never become a practical reality. By the time it was published, the great heretic whom it was designed to strike in the first instance had disappeared more than three weeks before, leaving not a trace. He had long reached a safe refuge, in the region of the birds and the air, and from his seat among the clouds laughed at the attacks of the "Antichrist," which seemed to him no more dangerous than the "pompous smoke" of the coal mines he saw ever rising in close squadrons towards heaven from the green wilderness around his Patmos. Most of his followers thought of the edict as he did. They regarded it simply as non-existent, and at first could in most cases do so quite unpunished.

For not even the ecclesiastical princes, who had it most at heart, dared to publish the new edict, far less put it into execution. In the Hapsburg territories alone, particularly the Netherlands, the authorities at once took serious steps to execute it. Not until 1524 did Catholic governments in South Germany begin to follow this example. When they did, their attempts only produced the effect which Luther, the Elector of Saxony and other far-sighted men had feared—a localised agrarian rebellion in the southern districts of the Black Forest was transformed into a revolutionary rising of the lesser folk in town and country, embracing the whole of Southern and Central Germany, which conjured the horrors of civil war upon half the Empire.

But the edict had other results also, fateful to the Empire and the evangelical movement. Since the Empire did nothing, and could do nothing, during the next nine years, the decision of the religious question throughout that time was left entirely to the discretion of the individual Estates. Little thought as there was at that time of proclaiming the well-known principle *Cujus regio, ejus religio* as a law of the Empire, yet in fact that principle already prevailed. And the publication of the edict, which irrevocably decided the future of the evangelical movement, decided also the political future of Germany. Nobody who read it could retain any doubt that the Protestants could now only maintain their right to existence by a struggle against the Emperor, and anyone who drew the necessary conclusions from this must sooner or later realise that the Estates of Protestant tendencies could only protect themselves against the Emperor by the policy of a firm anti-Hapsburg alliance. This aim could not be attained without a further weakening of the Empire and a corresponding strengthening of the territorial powers. Thus the edict, though it did not indeed create the internal antagonisms which in the next century gradually brought about the disintegration and downfall of the Empire, nevertheless so greatly sharpened and accentuated them that the forces of destruction were henceforth able to expand unchecked.

These effects, however, did not become manifest until later years. But the edict immediately produced one effect which, according to the traditional view, was fateful to the internal development of the Protestant movement: precisely at the moment when a transition from words to deeds, from criticism to practical reform seemed indicated, it robbed the Protestants of the living presence and help of their born leader. In consequence, men of more radical opinions gained the upper hand in Wittenberg, who by their fanatical zeal sadly compromised the evangelical cause; and so, at the turn of the years 1521–2, here in the van and forum of the movement, a dangerous internal crisis developed, which the young party could not overcome without paying toll in strength and reputation. But does this traditional conception of the so-called Wittenberg upheavals of 1521–2 agree with the present state of research? H. Barge makes a decided attack upon it. In his view it was not Luther's sudden disappearance, but his sudden return to Wittenberg which was fateful to the evangelical cause. Luther's sudden disappearance did more good than harm. For it gave free play to a new religious tendency which by its moral energy and practical force compares advantageously with Luther. This new tendency was the lay-Christian Puritanism of Karlstadt. Karlstadt was successful in reforming the Church services, the administration of charity and the regulation of public morality in Wittenberg, in the sense of this new tendency. It was no fault of his that the students in November and December 1521 were guilty of a few innocent demonstrations in which they went rather too far, or that an attack on images took place in 1522. He would undoubtedly, in spite of these excesses committed by isolated members of his following, have maintained himself in his leading position had not the Catholic Duke Georg of Saxony succeeded in frightening his cousin, the old Elector, with the threat that the Catholic *Reichsregiment*, the governing Council of the Empire, would take steps against the Wittenbergers at the first opportunity. In his alarm the Elector not only suspended the reforms, but also recalled Luther from the Wartburg to exorcise the spirit of unrest in the city. Thus in March 1522 Luther, without suspecting it, came to Wittenberg as the executor of the *Reichsregiment,* put an end to the promising endeavours of the lay-Christian Puritanism and restored the Catholic rite in all its forms.

This construction of the case is absolutely new, and for that reason has already won much applause. But is it as correct as it is novel? Does it quite do justice to Luther's conduct and motives, and does it rest upon an accurate judgment of the importance and gifts of Luther and Karlstadt? In order to answer this question let us first make clear, as briefly as possible, the principles which governed the reformer's practical conduct, then and later. They are very simple, and in part universally known. The first is: no violent upheaval of existing ecclesiastical arrangements with the help of the rude fist of "Master Omnes," *i.e.* the masses aroused into rebellion. Such violent upheaval is in the first place unnecessary. For the message of the Gospel will make its own way. Every honest man who hears it must and will sooner or later follow it, whatever the Papists may do to bar its progress—this opinion the reformer himself afterwards described as a pious illusion. But, in the second place, rebellion is never right, no matter how righteous its cause may be. It is always a device of the devil, which makes worse the evil it seeks to combat. In the third place, people who stir up rebellion take upon themselves an office which does not pertain to them, but only to the Christian nobility or the Christian governments. It is the duty of the nobles as Christians to care for the common weal of Christendom. But as nobles they have the sole right of combating existing wrongs, should no other means avail, by force. For these abuses are all in some way bound up with the ordinance of material life, which stands under the sovereign power of the ruling authority. This sovereign power has, as Occam taught earlier, only one limitation—natural law or the law of reason; that is, it is bound neither by ecclesiastical law, for ecclesiastical law is a purely imaginary law, nor by written secular law, the law of the Emperor or of the State, for all written law has natural law or reason as its source and vital principle. Therefore it must be improved through reason or in accordance with natural law, and indeed, if need arise, be replaced by the law of reason. But in this case, can the people who have no official power do nothing at all for Evangelism? They can do a great deal, they can do what indeed is most important of all: they can speak, preach, write, and so propagate and help to propagate the Gospel that the Papists find their cover growing ever more scanty. They can further, by advice and admonition, induce the authorities to intervene; in short, they can serve the cause of the Gospel with tongue and pen by diligent propaganda, in exactly the same way as the reformer himself. But if the authorities are slow to perform their office, what is to become of the many people of Protestant views who, for instance, regard the sacrificial Mass as blasphemy, or the evangelically minded priests, who are even compelled by virtue of their office to continue to celebrate Mass? To this the reformer replies as early as 1520, shortly and clearly: they shall quietly continue to attend Mass and sing Mass, until the simple folk are sufficiently well instructed to make it possible to introduce throughout Germany a communion service in German after the institution of Christ. It is perfectly possible for them to wait; for meanwhile they can invest the offertory and the sacrificial rites with a spiritual interpretation, and thus avoid doing any violence to their feelings. But it is also their duty to wait; for he who, through faith in the Gospel, has been freed from the illusion that salvation depends upon ceremonies must, should and can accept these ceremonies out of love for his brethren who as yet cannot give them up; provided that he declares freely in speech and writing that he submits to these tyrannical principles only from love of his weaker brethren. Thus to wait in patience is definitely the duty of the priest who has to conduct public services. However hard he may find it to speak the offertory and perform the sacrificial ceremonies, he may not, on his own initiative, change a single word in the Liturgy nor omit one of the prescribed rites of worship. This intolerable compulsion (to which, however, in his inward freedom, he can always reconcile himself) should only spur him on to preach the Gospel the more energetically in his sermons, and thus enlighten the weak and the simple ones in his congregation who in mental serfdom still adhere to the old ways, and educate them to evangelical freedom. But is the priest obliged to make such allowances if he is celebrating only for himself or for persons of his own way of thinking? Not at all; on the contrary it is praiseworthy that a priest of evangelical views should cease to read private Masses, or that a convent of monks by common resolve should put an end to the celebration of Mass in their own church. For in this case the fear of harming the weak and simple does not arise.

These are the principles which already inspired Luther's conduct in 1520–1. It will be seen that they entirely correspond to the state of the evangelical movement at that time, and demand nothing impossible of those of evangelical views. But it is possible to have very clear principles and yet be completely incapable of creating new regulations and organisations to give these principles practical validity. It is usual to deny the reformer the possession of this gift in any degree. But is that justified? It is not; even if he does not belong among the great organisers of history, such as St. Paul, Calvin, Laski, he nevertheless possessed sufficient knowledge of men and of the world to carry out the organising work which now fell to him *for the first time*. It is sufficient to indicate two famous documents which play the leading part in the demonstration of Barge's theory, because he thinks himself entitled to ascribe them to his hero Karlstadt. One is the so-called *Beutelordnung* of Wittenberg, which governs the administration of charity on entirely new principles. It can be proved that these principles are originally Luther's. But it can also be proved that the ordinance itself was introduced through Luther's influence, and with his help, during the period from December 25 to January 11, 1521, or a little before. The other document is the much-discussed Municipal Ordinance of Wittenberg, research upon which is not yet concluded. So much, however, is certain, that the ordinance is not the creation of Karlstadt alone, but that other men had a part in it who were not in sympathy with Karlstadt's radicalism; further, that it only received the form in which it is now printed after the change in the Council of February 2, 1522; lastly, that it never came into force in this form, but was withdrawn by its chief originators no later than February 13. Karlstadt's contribution to it can still be clearly discerned: it consists of the clauses on the destruction of images and altars, the conduct of the Church service, perhaps also the article on the confiscation of the Mass stipends. All the remaining contents of the document, the articles on the administration of charity, the regulations against mendicancy, against prostitutes and brothels, are merely a reproduction or a further development of ideas already formed by Luther.

But even if Karlstadt was not the originator of the two famous ordinances, it does not follow that he was not, as Barge claims, the founder of a "new type of piety" which distinguishes itself from the Lutheran type to the disadvantage of the latter. He did indeed "enrich" the Lutheran type by certain new ideas. But what extraordinary ideas they are! No priest may receive an office unless he is married and is already the father of one or two children. Any communicant who takes only the bread and not the chalice commits a *sin*. The recipient of the Host must take the bread and the chalice with his own hand. For Christ said: "*Take* and eat"! To keep images in a church is against the first Commandment, to place images upon the altar is more heinous still, to make images is worse than adultery or theft. Fasting and confession are not commanded in the Bible and therefore should be abolished. It behoves the authorities to order preachers, under heavy penalties, to preach *nothing* that is not contained and taught in the Scriptures. If the authorities prove negligent in this, and if they do not purge the churches of statues, pictures and altars, then the community has power to take the law into its own hands, and to carry out by force the reforms it considers necessary. These doctrines indeed breathe a very different spirit from that of Luther's *De libertate Christiana*; here the old law has come into its own again—the lowest made highest, the least greatest and the last first, and all kinds of *outward* observances are "as highly exalted and puffed up as if the salvation of the world hung more upon them than upon Christ." The fanatical trait which clings to all statutory piety is also in evidence. That such fanatical legislation is not evangelical should surely not be a matter for dispute among Christians, nor would Barge seriously deny it. It was only the heat of the fight that caused him to overlook what was hard, narrow and limited in his hero.

With all this, however, it is still by no means proved that Karlstadt was also guilty of *acts* of fanaticism during the Wittenberg upheavals, and that these upheavals really deserved that name, and were not merely, as Barge believes, harmless demonstrations in which students from other parts had the greatest share. Let us therefore survey the course of this movement, on the evidence of the genuine documents, and ask ourselves at the end whether Luther and the Saxon government were unjust to Karlstadt and his fellows!

Anyone coming to Wittenberg in the summer of 1521 might easily have believed, in the first moment, that the reformer was still present in person, fulfilling his office in his wonted place; so powerfully was his influence to be felt, even in outward things, throughout the life of the town. The *Budelingen* and *Brauerben*, who belonged to the much-respected fraternities of St. Sebastian and St. Anne, were just in process of abolishing the fraternity banquets so sharply disapproved by him. The Council was endeavouring further to develop the regulations for the administration of charity created, at his instigation and with his help, at the end of 1520 or the beginning of 1521, and the professors, students, abbots and monks continued their indefatigable consultations and disputes on the problems he had set them. Three of these problems were now the subject of particularly lively discussion. Should priests marry in spite of their oath of celibacy? May the monks also disregard their vows? What is to be done concerning the Mass? To the first question the reformer had already roundly answered Yes. In consequence there was no longer a vast amount of argument on that point. What was now important was to draw the practical conclusions from what was considered right and good. The first to find courage enough to do so was, significantly enough, a personal pupil of Luther's, an influential member of the University, the Provost Bartholomäus Bernhardi of Kemberg. On May 30 he took to wife his cook. With this, the first question was as good as settled. On the other two questions, a clear conclusion was not so speedily reached. For the reformer was not known to have given any definite answer on them as yet. Only when he had stated his attitude towards the question of the Mass, in a letter of August 1, and towards the question of the monastic vow in his "Themes" of September 9, did the discussion become fevered, and the wish become active to pass once more from mere deliberation to daring and decided action. But in doing so, did his followers always keep exactly to the principles and directions of their absent master? On September 29 Melancthon and some of his pupils, for the first time, privately celebrated communion in the parish church in the two species. Was this in the spirit of Luther? Entirely. Thereupon, on the afternoon of October 6, the Augustinian monk, Gabriel Zwilling, preached, in the Augustinian chapel, a great sermon against the Mass, in which he declared that he would in future cease to hold Masses, and on the same day his fellow-monks resolved to do away with the traditional Mass service in their chapel and celebrate communion in future only in accordance with the precepts of Christ. Was this also in agreement with Luther's wishes? Entirely. But Zwilling at once went a step further. He contended that whoever continued to attend Mass was guilty of idolatry; that it was a *sin* to communicate in the one kind only. Had Luther ever said this? No! Rather was it in complete contradiction to his principles and opinions. In the same month of October Zwilling, in his sermons, fearlessly attacked the question of the monastic vows. Here again, however, he was not content to declare, with Luther: the vows are contrary to the Gospel, and therefore the monks are free to cast off the cassock. He said at once: the monks *must* give up the monastic state. And if they are not willing, they must be forced. Let them be insulted in the streets, let them starve, destroy their monasteries, until they submit. It will be seen that he was already striking the fanatical note. The effects soon showed themselves. From November 4 onwards, fifteen Augustinians one by one retired from the cloister. This, in itself, might seem quite right to Luther. For he saw in it only a voluntary step on the part of his erstwhile fellow-monks. That Zwilling demanded the compulsory unfrocking of all the religious was unknown to him, and had he learned of it he would have opposed it most strongly. For compulsion in such things was utterly abhorrent to him.

How did the authoritative circles of Wittenberg, the University and the Chapter of the Cathedral, receive the bold conduct of the Augustinians? At first they by no means altogether agreed with it. A committee of six professors instituted by the University and the Chapter, immediately after Zwilling's first sermon (October 8), requested the Augustinians "to abstain from innovation for the time being"; but on October 20 it applied to the Elector, petitioning him, as a Christian prince, to abolish the abuse of the Mass in his lands with all speed, that unrest and disorder might be avoided. This was a fairly naïve request, particularly when made to such a cautious lord as Friedrich der Weise. Friedrich answered very promptly (October 25) with the command not to precipitate matters, and to do nothing which might result in discord, uproar and trouble, and at the same time asked the Chapter and the University to make a formal statement of their arguments on the questions concerned. But the movement, once started on its course, could not simply be ordered back. On November 1 again a private communion service with bread and wine was held in the parish church, and it was taken part in this time not only by members of the University but by townspeople also. It can be seen from this that the new ideas had already found their way among the ordinary citizens. During the same period the Town Council ordered the Chapter to appoint Melancthon town parson, to dissolve the twenty-one fraternities existing in connection with the parish church and transfer their property to the town hospital. The Chapter, however, rejected both these proposals. But it may be seen from this gesture that the Council was now also beginning to bestir itself in the evangelical cause. During November a whole succession of priests inaugurated private Masses. In short, the old form of worship began gradually to dissolve of itself. In exchange there was introduced, first as a private ceremony among the evangelically minded, a new type of service, whose central point was communion in accordance with the institution of Christ—*i.e.* without the offertory, the prescribed words being recited aloud in German, and with Communion in both kinds.

But there was no lack of individuals, both students and citizens, who found this gradual development far too slow. On Monday, December 2, early in the morning, before the first Mass, "certain citizens and students suddenly broke out in the parish church," snatched the books from the altar by force, took down the candlesticks and candles, and ended by driving the priests out of the house of God. On the 3rd and 4th these proceedings were repeated, and in consequence the Council determined that henceforth armed municipal servants should "be present" during Mass in all the churches in the city. New disturbances arose on December 4 when a notice was discovered nailed up at the Franciscan monastery to the effect that the monks were to be forcibly prevented from reading Mass.

A mob of students did indeed appear outside the monastery and flung many insults at the poor brothers. Again, on December 6, about forty armed nobles and students gathered together in the neighbourhood of the monastery, intending, they said, to storm the building and kill the monks. They marched about the streets with trumpets and pipes, making a hideous noise. But as the municipality kept good watch, they broke up towards midnight with their object unaccomplished. It was precisely these days of agitation (December 4–9) which Luther, in deepest secrecy, spent in the town. What impression the proceedings above described made upon him may be gathered from the address which immediately on his return to the Wartburg he hastened to put on paper: a "Faithful Exhortation to all Christians to guard themselves against Uproar and Rebellion." He regarded the situation as very serious, and his judgment was shared by the Elector, the Council, and even a certain proportion of the students. Hermann Mühlpfordt, a student, wrote home gloomily on December 10: "Such discord and disunion reigns here among the citizens and scholars that it is painful to write of it. It is to be feared that it will come to no good end." How well founded this fear was that same day showed. A number of citizens that day burst tempestuously into the Council's session, and stormily urged the Council to grant the following articles:—the disturbers of the peace arrested in the past few weeks were to be set free at once; *everyone* might in future preach the Gospel freely; no priest should be compelled to read Mass; all votive and wedding Masses and Masses for the dead, together with all the Church ceremonies for the benefit of the dead, were to be abolished; communion in both species should be given to anyone who desired it; all inns in which excessive drinking was permitted, and all houses of ill-fame, were to be closed, and prostitution severely punished. What does this event prove? That a definite "conspiracy" had been formed among the citizens, as was opined quite rightly at the Elector's Court, to bring about a drastic reformation in Wittenberg with the help of the Council. The purport of the articles, broadly speaking, embodied Luther's wishes. But it was strange to demand that *everyone* should be free to preach the Gospel; stranger still to address such demands directly to the Council, which had absolutely no say in such things; and to attempt definitely to force the Council into agreement was open to the gravest criticism. The Council were at first so disconcerted that they set free the arrested rioters immediately. Then, however, they hastily turned to the Elector, asking at once prudently and piteously for help. Friedrich promptly intervened. On December 17, having assembled the whole community of Wittenberg at the castle, he issued through two of his officials an order forbidding any further molestation of the clergy, on pain of severe punishments and disgrace, placed the released prisoners, or those of them who could be laid hands on, once more under lock and key, instituted proceedings against the heads of the conspiracy, and informed the citizens that they were to abstain from any independent action until he himself should propose new ordinances. But this did not restore peace to the town. There was much murmuring among the dissatisfied. Indeed, they now addressed letters of complaint to the Elector direct. Worse still, it was at this moment that one of the best-known professors of the University placed himself at the very head of the movement—Karlstadt.

During these days (December 12) the professors had at last given their opinion upon the inquiry concerning the Mass submitted to them; but as was to be expected, they were absolutely unable to "agree on a unanimous pronouncement." Eight of them, including Karlstadt and Melancthon, recommended that all votive Masses and Masses for the dead be abolished and the Mass service reformed in accordance with the manner and form of the Apostles. Seven gave judgment in favour of the old ways, and one even handed in a *votum separatissimum*. One can well understand the resolutions expressed by the Elector from Lochau on December 19: If you, a handful of Doctors, have not been able to agree on this matter, how much less agreement will there be when the thing comes to be judged by many people! Therefore the old usage shall remain until other Universities have given their views on the subject. The Elector's words were plain enough. But did the professors carry out this clear command? No; Karlstadt nevertheless announced publicly, on December 22, that on January 1 he would hold for the first time, instead of the prescribed public Mass in the Castle Church, an "apostolic" Mass with communion in both species. Thus he now wished to make what had so far been done only in private services into a new order for the public services in the Elector's church, thus abrogating the old form of public worship for ever. When the news of this reached Lochau, the Elector at once sent orders to the recusant professors in person, impressing upon them once more that no alterations were to be made in the Mass (December 23–24). Karlstadt had no doubt expected this. In order to be beforehand with the Elector, he held his evangelical Mass on December 25 instead of January 1. His example was followed on the same day by the chaplain Ambrosius Wilken in the neighbouring town of Dobien, on January 1 by Nicasius Claaij at Schmiedeberg, Franz Günther at Lochau, and Zwilling at Eilenburg. It is thus sufficiently clear that Karlstadt's action was no improvisation, but a well-prepared scheme, carefully agreed upon in advance with his closest fellow-reformers.

The time of this attack, however, could not have been more unfortunately chosen. The days between Christmas and New Year were the days in which fell the old ecclesiastical Feast of Fools, during which all kinds of mummery and foolery were perpetrated and tolerated in the churches. The rowdy demonstrations which arose in Wittenberg on Christmas Eve must therefore not be taken too tragically; but it was regrettable that the wild fellows who had spent the night in drinking and carousing proceeded in the morning, their heads heavy with beer, to Karlstadt's communion service, and that in the course of this innovation itself the violent instincts of Master Omnes revealed themselves here and there in a very ugly light. At Eilenburg, for instance, at one of these ceremonies on January 11 or 13, Zwilling's followers became so inflamed that immediately afterwards they plundered the parsonage and subjected those who clung to the old faith to very rough handling.

At the same time—again through Zwilling's excess of zeal—grave disturbances had broken out again in Wittenberg. Since January 6 the Chapter of the German Augustinian congregation had been holding its meeting there in the Black Monastery. As the majority of the delegates held evangelical views, they resolved that every member of the congregation should thenceforth be at liberty to secede from the Order. The solemn vows, binding throughout life, are annulled. The monks who still of their own accord wish to remain in the monastery shall continue to wear the cowl, to obey the superiors of the convent and to observe the regulations of the house, as far as they are not contrary to the Gospel. Those brothers who have a gift for preaching and teaching can be employed as preachers in the public church services or those of the monastery; the rest, by the work of their hands, shall earn the money needed for the maintenance of the conventual community. Begging is strictly forbidden to all brothers from now on. What do these resolutions signify? At first sight nothing more than a reform in the institution of monasticism on the principles of Dr. Martinus. But as most of the monks, after the dissolution of their solemn vows, left the cloister, and in consequence the conventual domestic organisation could not be maintained where the resolutions were made, the reform necessarily entailed the closing of the monastery, and indeed the dissolution of the whole congregation.

Rich in consequences as this meeting was, a greater sensation was aroused throughout Germany by a new stroke which the ex-monk Gabriel Zwilling ventured shortly afterwards against the old form of worship. On January 11, in concert with certain of the brothers, he razed to the ground all the altars in the Augustinian chapel, struck the heads off the stone statues of Christ, the Virgin and the saints, destroyed the mural paintings, and tore down all the pictures and carved wooden reliefs, etc., which were then burnt in the court outside together with the crucifixes, banners, candlesticks, candles and the consecrated oil. On January 13 he justified his act before the whole people in two sermons which he preached in the holy place he had laid waste, the theses of which were as follows:—images and altars are no longer to be tolerated, because the law of Moses forbade them. For the same reason, no feast day is to be kept henceforward except Sunday. No one in future will be permitted to fast or confess himself. Thus, once more by Zwilling's agency, a new and serious question was raised which could not but cause deep agitation among the lesser folk—the question of images. How did the townsfolk and the University receive this new outburst of violence on Zwilling's part? Most of the professors declared themselves against him. Melancthon, indeed, was so beside himself at the "shameful things done in the name of the Gospel" that he expressed his intention to leave Wittenberg at Easter. Only one—Karlstadt—again sided enthusiastically with Zwilling. Among the citizens and students also there were "but few whom the new times pleased." Even the "well-wishers of Dr. Martinus," who regarded it as a progress in itself that the old Mass was now abolished altogether, even in the parish church and the church of the Franciscan Monastery, and that so many priests, including some members of the electoral chantry, had renounced their stipends and so many monks had returned to secular life, to earn their bread henceforth in the sweat of their brow as carpenters, cobblers, bakers and salters—even they were at last somewhat shocked at the "daily sermons against the whole ecclesiastical estate and the 'devilish' Mass" and scarcely edified by the ever-increasing disorder in ecclesiastical conditions. For the people "who now began evangelical Masses on all sides were by no means at one in the matter," and the greater the number of vacated benefices and deserted monasteries became, the greater became the danger that the whole organised administration of ecclesiastical property, which was closely bound up with the economic life of the city, would dissolve, and important economic values be lost or alienated from their original purposes. Nowhere were the "scandalousness" of this state of affairs, and the evil consequences appearing in social and economic life, more keenly felt than in the City Hall in Wittenberg. But the city fathers had not the courage to arrest the disorder on their own initiative. They turned for advice and help to the most powerful corporation in the town, the University, whose professors in many cases were canons of All Saints' Church, and therefore seemed called upon to avail themselves of the supervisory rights over the parish church which pertained to that foundation. The University willingly complied with this appeal; a Reform Committee was formed of the Rector, Dr. Eisermann, and Professors Jonas, Karlstadt, Melancthon and Amsdorf, which on January 24, 1522, began to deliberate at the City Hall, in union with the city fathers, upon a new regulation of ecclesiastical conditions. The committee that same day put forth the following proposals. In future only "evangelical Masses" were to be allowed in the parish church; all those elements and usages in the Catholic Liturgy which were offensive to evangelical views, the offertory prayers of the so-called lesser and greater canon, the elevation of the consecrated Host and the consecrated chalice for adoration, the chants addressed to the saints, and the sequences, were to be definitely abolished. In the place of the greater canon the words of the institution were to be spoken aloud in German, and at the conclusion of this the communicants were to be bidden to take the Eucharist in both species. For the rest, however, the traditional Latin Liturgy should continue to be used. On the same day it was further resolved that the images should in time be removed from the parish church; and on the 25th it was added that the property of the twenty-one fraternities, the Mass stipends vacant through the death or retirement of their former holders, and also the treasures of the church, were to be confiscated for the benefit of the "poor fund." A municipal guardian of the poor was to be appointed for each street in the town. Begging was now forbidden even to monks, schoolboys and students. Prostitutes and women of irregular life must either marry at once or leave the city. These decisions meant a complete victory for those who had drafted the articles of December 10, but was it also a complete victory for Karlstadt? No; the images were to be done away with, not immediately, as Karlstadt demanded, but only "in time"; and with reference to the communion it was laid down only that communicants *might* take the chalice and the Host with their own hands—not that they *must* do so. On the following days the deliberations continued. The next question to be settled was, it appears, the difficult one of the monasteries. The Council was empowered to take an inventory of the movable and immovable possessions of the two monasteries, and to order the younger monks, who were capable of learning a trade, to vacate the monasteries by March 30. It was further resolved to reorganise completely the administration of Church property; to establish a new Church treasury from which capital should be distributed free of interest to poor craftsmen; to give special preference in the administration of charity to orphans, poor people's children and in particular girls left without relatives; to assign six gulden a year as compensation to the priests deprived of their occupation by the abolition of the Mass stipends, to impose a municipal poor rate, and so on. Finally, the committee accepted also Karlstadt's proposal to destroy all the altars in the parish church except three. Thus there was truly no lack of reforming zeal. But all this was not enough for Karlstadt. To him the question of images was now the greatest question in religion. As the Council did not immediately give way to him in this question, he sought by all means to urge it on by thundering against this abomination in the Lord's house with word and pen. Finally, he issued from the pulpit a threatening declaration that if the authorities were backward, the community had full power to seize the government into its own hands and, out of love and pity, effect the necessary changes itself. It was not surprising that at this the community did take the government into its own hands. About February 6 a mob of citizens invaded the parish church, took possession of the pictures, statues, crosses and crucifixes, smashed or tore them to pieces and burnt them. The Council at once took action, arrested the offenders and hastily despatched an express courier to the Elector. But the harm was done, and before the Elector had time to make his reply known, the news of this latest crime of the Wittenbergers was already flying through all the States of Germany.

The Elector, who after Christmas had moved to Allstedt in Thuringia, had then only just heard (February 5 or 6), through a complaint from the Old Catholic canons of All Saints' Church, and reports of several of the councillors, of all that had occurred during the last four weeks in his excellent capital and town of residence. This news alone—he did not hear of the outbreak against the images until later—incensed him highly, as may well be understood. That people at the University and the City Hall should thus disregard his express orders was a thing he could not permit under any circumstances. He therefore lost no time in directing his Privy Councillor Einsiedel, who had several times of himself exhorted the Wittenbergers to moderation, to take proceedings against the innovators. Thereupon Einsiedel, on February 13, summoned the members of the Reform Committee, Professor Feldkirch and two canons to him at Eilenburg. The committee artlessly brought with them the new "Ordinance of the City of Wittenberg," which had meanwhile been completed and had even appeared in print. Einsiedel, of course, immediately declared it unacceptable, and read such a lesson to the chief cause of the disturbance, Karlstadt, that the defiant man at once climbed down most pitiably. He not only admitted that he had by his speeches caused the attack on the images, but also promised to abstain from all preaching in future. Zwilling, who had already fled from Wittenberg at the time of the attack, alarmed at the effect of his words, later showed himself no less submissive. What matters most, however, is that the professors let drop the " Ordinance " they had drafted with so much enthusiasm and industry, and in concert with the Elector's councillors drew up an entirely new Ordinance, in which they renounced almost all their reforms in the church service. Only the sacrificial prayer of the Silent Mass was to remain in abeyance, and the words of consecration were still to be spoken aloud in German by the officiating priest. But this was still not enough for the Elector. Just at this moment news arrived at his Court that the *Reichsregiment* had on January 20 issued a mandate against the innovations in the Electorate of Saxony and had entrusted the execution of it to the Bishops of Brandenburg, Merseburg and Meissen. Nothing could be more unwelcome to Friedrich than such a " visitation " as this. This reason in itself sufficed to make him reject the Eilenburg agreement altogether on February 17. At the same time he informed the professors that they would have done best to leave the old state of affairs intact, in accordance with his express desire. What did this mean, translated from the obscure style of the Chancery into plain words ? It meant that the people of Wittenberg were simply to abandon all their ecclesiastical innovations. Were they in a position to resist this clearly stated wish of the Elector's ? They were not. They had come to the end of their resources. They could see absolutely no way out of the situation. Then in this hour of need they hit upon the saving thought of appealing for aid to Luther—the one man capable of helping them out of the sad pass they had got into, and restoring normal relations between the city and the Electoral Court. Probably on the same day on which the Elector's fateful missive arrived—February 20—the Council despatched a courier on horseback to the Wartburg and urgently begged

Dr. Martinus to take his place in Wittenberg again without delay.

Luther had heard nothing from Wittenberg for weeks. All the greater was his wrath now. Yet he thought at first that it would be enough for him to send instructions by letter to those who had brought about this misfortune. The longer he wrote, however, the clearer it became to him that he must put things to rights himself. He hastened therefore to announce to the Elector, probably on the same day, that he would be there directly. The old gentleman was alarmed. He promptly sent his official Oswald von Eisenach with orders to make the strongest representations to the Doctor "on no account to return to Wittenberg at present." But the Doctor could no longer be held back. In the early hours of March 1 he rode out. In what mood he came we may learn from the famous letter which he sent the Elector on March 5 from Borna. He knows, he says, that he is betaking himself once more to the scene of battle against his lord's wishes, and that the Elector will be unable, with the best will in the world, to protect him if the *Reichsregiment* should choose to execute the Imperial ban against him. But he has no need of any human aid or protection. He begs the Elector, in magnificent words, to do nothing more for him, and to perform his duty to the Emperor even if the order should require that he be seized and killed. In the course of March 6 he arrived in Wittenberg. On the 7th the Elector sent Professor Schurpff to exact a written declaration from him that he had returned to Wittenberg "without our permission." This declaration was intended, should need arise, to stop the mouths of Friedrich's enemies. Luther complied at once; he even crossed out, at the old man's wish, certain sentences which were not altogether flattering to the *Reichsregiment*, and allowed the courtier Spalatin to tune his powerful style somewhat more into the Court key. He was able to do this without in any way misrepresenting the truth. For the position was indeed as he stated in the revised declaration; he had returned to Wittenberg "without the knowledge, will, aid, permission or approval of his lord."

On March 9 he reappeared for the first time in the pulpit of the parish church; and to make it plain to the dullest eye how little importance attached to external things, he appeared, not as "Junker Jörg," but as a monk, with smoothly shaven face and freshly shorn tonsure, in the black cowl of the Augustinians in which the people of Wittenberg were accustomed to see him and were now to see him again, day in and day out, until October 9, 1524. He began, quite as usual, to expound the prescribed pericope. Then, however, he dropped the text and "turned his attention to the present affair." But he avoided all direct polemic. He named no names. He spoke only as the advocate of the weak, to whom those who thought themselves strong had, in their lovelessness, given so much scandal. The fact that they had rushed ahead without orders and ought to have obtained permission of the authorities, *i.e.* the Elector, was mentioned only incidentally. He preached in the same way daily throughout the following week, and made a powerful impression. Through the whole city there was "great gladness and rejoicing at his coming and his words, among learned and unlearned alike." Even Zwilling admitted that he had "been wrong and had gone too far." Karlstadt alone kept ill-humouredly apart. Thus the spirit of unrest and disorder in the town and the University was banished. But now did not Luther immediately go a step further? Did he not immediately "restore the Catholic rite in all its forms"? To answer this question, we need only refer to two documents already mentioned. One is the last "Mass Ordinance of the City of Wittenberg," accepted by Karlstadt and his fellows on February 13—this already reintroduces the "Catholic rite" in very essential points; the other is the Elector's order of February 17, which in reality left the Wittenbergers no option but to give up *all* their innovations, including even the German consecration. Whether they had in the meantime made up their minds to do this, we do not know. In any case, it did not enter Luther's mind to "restore the whole Catholic rite in all its forms." The private Masses and the *daily* public Mass service, *compulsory* confession and *compulsory* fasting, were, naturally, not re-established. Further, the clergy continued in the Sunday and feast-day services, on Luther's express advice, to omit the offertory, which was particularly abhorrent to the evangelists; this everyone knew, though it did not appear outwardly, since this part of the Mass was again prayed in silence. Nor did he, of course, abolish the Eucharist in both kinds; but for the time he let it be administered only at private celebrations to people who presented themselves of their own accord. In short, he sought to preserve in essentials the state of things which had developed regarding the religious cult in the time between September 29 and December 2, 1521. The *public* service again proceeded outwardly in the Catholic form. But besides these there were private services which bore an essentially evangelical character. Still less did he think of abrogating the other innovations which had come into being in the last few months. The regulations as to public morality, relating to beggars, prostitutes and evil livers, naturally remained in force. The monasteries were not re-established, and those members of the clergy who had abandoned that state were not compelled to resume their functions. The statement that the "Wittenberg Reformation" was cancelled by a blind and violent reaction is thus simply an error. Only in religious ceremonial there was a retrograde step. And what was this retrogression compared with the progress gained even in this sphere—a progress whose durability was only now finally assured by Luther's authority. For there can hardly be any doubt that only Luther's presence induced the Elector and his advisers to leave things to themselves again in Wittenberg, thus keeping the path open for further reforms.

Such, according to the original documents, is the history of the Wittenberg disturbances of 1521–2. It will be seen that we are dealing not merely with disturbances[1] in Wittenberg, but with a movement which included a whole series of other little places: Dobien, Lochau, Eilenburg, Schmiedeberg, Düben, Herzberg, Jessen. It is clear too that it was not a revolutionary movement in which everything was overturned and submerged, but a serious attempt to reform the Church ceremonial, ecclesiastical organisation, and the administration of charity in harmony with Luther's principles, in the course of which, at Wittenberg and Eilenburg, there certainly arose grave temporary excesses and disorders. That this attempt was only half successful is not to be imputed either to Luther or to the principles he represented, but solely to the incapacity and short-sightedness of the men who placed themselves at the head of the movement, and who failed to perceive even that a reform against the will and wish of the Elector was a thing of impossibility. It was unquestionably one result of the movement to bring out this fact very clearly, so that henceforth no one could fail to realise how little could be achieved in these matters without the concurrence of "the authorities."

---

[1] The so-called "Zwickau Prophets," Nickel Storch, Marx Thomä surnamed (Bad-) Stübner, and Thomas Drechsel, who entered Wittenberg on Dec. 21, 1521, had no share in the disturbances, probably owing to the fact that their Head Prophet Storch, who was a thorough-going

But does not this give too low an estimation of Karlstadt? Was he not more than a blind zealot? Can he not be described as the "Calvinist among the Wittenbergers" and real father of Puritanism? No. The principal characteristic of Calvinistic and Puritan piety is its ardour for the purification and sanctification of *morals*, which is not to be observed either in him or in Zwilling, who always preceded him as an advance scout. The interest of both men is entirely absorbed in the struggle against idolatry in the rites of worship. Precisely what constitutes the greatness of

---

communist and bloodthirsty Apocalyptic, immediately left the town again. Their hatred was directed principally against Melancthon, whom they alarmed considerably. Among the students and townspeople, however, their arrival was so little noticed that the student Pfau, of Zwickau, in the news of the happenings in Wittenberg which he sent about Jan. 15 to the Mayor of Zwickau, makes no mention of them at all. Only later did they succeed in gaining a few followers. Their most important conquest was Karlstadt, who is proved to have had dealings with Thomas Münzer also before December 21, 1522, and afterwards was closely connected with Münzer in Wittenberg, remaining in touch with him until 1524. Karlstadt at that time adopted most of Münzer's ideas, but unconditionally rejected the Prophet's sanguinary plans for the future.

Puritan piety is lacking in them; only its weaknesses, its tendency towards compulsion and fanaticism, are clearly marked. One might rather feel tempted to describe the petitioners of December 10, 1521, as Puritans, for they were deeply concerned with the purification and sanctification of morality. But they, again, demanded only what Luther had demanded long before. They were simply fervent Lutherans, and the fact that they were laymen is by no means sufficient grounds for characterising their action by the pompous phrase "lay-Christian Puritanism." For such fervent Lutherans have existed among laymen at all times. It is therefore hardly surprising that such a lay movement should have arisen in Wittenberg itself, where Luther's influence had already been at work so long. At most one might wonder that the Wittenbergers were so long in rousing themselves, and that they so soon, after using up their fire in a few outbreaks and petitions, sank back into that phlegmatic calm which Luther so often lamented in later years. But anyone who knows the country and the people will not wonder at this either. He will, on the contrary, be unfailingly astonished that the reformer succeeded in exerting such an influence, in this sleepy country town of hardly 3000 inhabitants, seemingly so little fitted to lead an intellectual movement, and in stirring to enthusiasm, for a time, the sluggish and stolid population of this no less stolid and unattractive stretch of land.

Karlstadt never recovered from the defeat which he suffered, not from Luther but from the Elector, and subsequently broke with Luther entirely. The story of this conflict need not be told here. It need only be pointed out that in those later dealings the same qualities again came strongly into prominence which characterised the conduct of this turbulent man in the years 1521–2: a notable tendency to seize upon any new opinion that was arising, a striking lack of natural respect for the law and an equally great ambition. In his later life, therefore, he continued to come into violent conflict from time to time with the people most closely connected with him, personally or officially, and even eventually separated from his wife. It can hardly be maintained that the fault in these misunderstandings was always on the side of the other people concerned and never on his. But it is more important to notice how little in his later life, as in 1521, Karlstadt worked upon thoughts of his own, how dependent he always was upon other people's ideas. Just as he had faithfully followed in Zwilling's tracks in 1521–2, so at the end of 1522 he turned with equal ardour to the mystical speculations and inspirational faith of Münzer. In 1523 he flung himself, led by Cornelius Hoen, into the correction of the doctrine of the Eucharist ; in 1529 he attached himself to the Anabaptist Melchior Hoffmann, and in 1530 to the reformers of Upper Germany and Switzerland. The sole independent thought which can be attributed to him is a very peculiar interpretation of Christ's words at the consecration of the Last Supper, which was not taken seriously even in the sixteenth century. It is therefore not through chance that he never managed to rise into the front rank, and nowhere left permanent traces of his work. His was not a great mind, but one of the many little minds which, startled out of their doctrinal slumber by the genius of Dr. Martinus, grossly misjudged their own powers and undertook independently to show their contemporaries new paths. The life of such men, who will more than they can accomplish, takes always a tragic course. But the pity which we feel for them should not make us forget that they do more harm than good to the cause they wish to serve. It was therefore no disadvantage to the evangelical movement, but a piece of good fortune hailed with gratitude by *all* its supporters, that Karlstadt's influence was so soon completely extinguished by the superior force of the man who had called forth that movement, and who, despite the weaknesses inherent in him too, was alone able really to govern it and, as far as it was destined, lead it on to victory.

CHAPTER IV

LUTHER AS SCHOLAR, ARTIST, AND MORALIST; HIS PRIVATE CHARACTER

SINCE Janssens' "History of the German People," no historical work has aroused such attention in Germany as Heinrich Denifle's "Luther and Lutheranism in their Earliest Development, studied from the Sources" (1 volume, Mainz, 1904). This book was at first equally a surprise to Catholics and to Protestants. Then there followed from the Protestant side a perfect storm of indignation, a flood of counter-writings, a vigorous debate in specialised periodicals, weekly and daily newspapers. But even in Catholic circles the work practically nowhere found undivided approval. A few scholars condemned it unconditionally. Others did not let it pass without sharp criticism. Not one of the readers competent to give judgment was in complete agreement with it.

Anyone who now takes up the book, which has since found a milder continuation in the "upper choir"—Grisar's "Luther"—will at first wonder somewhat at the excitement which its appearance called forth. It is, like Grisar's work, not at all a sensational book in the usual sense of the term. Strictly speaking, it is not a book at all, but a collection of very learned and often badly arranged essays on different problems of research connected with Luther. The specialist can learn a great deal from these essays. But the success of such books is never decided by the vote of the specialists, but by their presentation of the material and by the cause or *Tendenz* which they serve. In Denifle's case this *Tendenz* makes itself clear enough in his emphatic closing phrase: "Away from Luther, and back to the Church!" With Grisar it is to be deduced rather from the grouping and elucidation of the facts, the exposition and sometimes incomplete utilisation of the documentary material. Both authors are, however, honestly convinced that they have gone about their work in an entirely impartial, strictly historical and psychological spirit, and have at last placed before the eyes of humanity, so long misled, the "true Luther." This true Luther has certainly quite a different aspect, especially in Denifle's work, from that Luther depicted by "unscientific," non-Catholic research. He reveals himself before the judgment seat of "science," first, as a man of crass ignorance, and then as a glutton and drunkard of the worst sort, a bestial debauchee, a ribald brawler and mountebank of the lowest order, a writer who surpasses Zola in obscenity, an impudent falsifier, liar and cheat—in short, an individual who is a public danger, and who in "moral degradation" has yet to find his equal. To the expert this portrait, in its essential features, is not altogether new: he is already sufficiently acquainted with it from the Catholic polemical writings of the sixteenth to the eighteenth century, of which the learned Father has made grateful and thorough use. Luther's crass ignorance is Denifle's only new discovery. For the rest he has contented himself with applying the colours somewhat more strongly and crudely, and thus freshening up the old picture as finely as could be. Grisar is by no means so temperamental. He endeavours to be just to the "good side" of his subject, and abandons many extravagant judgments of the old polemic. But, for that very reason, his book has been far less influential. Denifle's coarse woodcut in the style of Murner has certainly not yet been superseded by this comparatively pale pencil drawing, which for all its thousand pages fails to put together a clear picture. Therefore it is still advisable to summon Denifle's "Luther," which lives on in so many minds, before the judgment seat, and to determine where he is right and where he is wrong. The judgment thus formed will, in most cases, apply also to Grisar's continuation, based as it is on Denifle's material.

It will be well to begin with Luther the crassly ignorant, the unmasking of whom has caused the learned Dominican so much time and trouble and of which he is so inordinately proud. We therefore ask: has the reformer really acquitted himself so badly in the many retrospective examinations which have been set him?

O. G. Schmidt has tested him on his knowledge of Greek and Roman classical literature. This test the reformer passed with good marks. He is certainly not very familiar with the Greek poets and prose-writers, though as late as 1523 he procured an edition of Homer, "in order to become a Greek." But, on the other hand, he has an exact knowledge of the Latin authors in favour at that time, Virgil, Terence, Ovid, Aesop, and also Cicero, Seneca, Catullus, Juvenal, Silius, Statius, Lucan, Suetonius, Sallust, Quintilian, Varro, Pomponius Mela, the elder and the younger Pliny, Tacitus' *Germanica*, and, of course, the universally admired neo-Latins, Baptista Mantuanus, Filelfo, etc. In the same way Schäfer and W. Kohler have examined the reformer in universal and ecclesiastical history. This test also went off well. For the reformer was a great lover of history, and at times engaged very seriously in historical studies. Lastly, Father Denifle has tested him in scholastic philosophy and theology. Result: *sub censura*. The candidate knows only the pseudo-theology of the closing Middle Ages. The prince of Scholasticism, St. Thomas, he has not studied at all while a student, and later only for polemical purposes. As an aggravating circumstance, the culprit nevertheless has the presumption to maintain: "I was brought up in Scholasticism, I know Scholasticism"; indeed, he once commits the shameless impertinence of saying: "I have read all the thousand Doctors." Undoubtedly this sounds very bad. But is the stern examiner right? No! As far as this piece of presumption is concerned—and it occurs only in a *marginal note*—Denifle has, for once (*interdum dormit Homerus*), permitted himself to be led astray by a printer's error. The original manuscript reads not *legi*, "I have read," but the imperative *lege*—"Read all the thousand Doctors, none will solve the question better." Thus Luther can be proved to have read the "prince of Scholasticism" as a student, and not only the Commentary on the *Sententiae* but also the greater and lesser *Summa*.[1] He also studied Peter the Lombard, Bernard of Clairvaux, Bonaventura, Scotus, Occam, Gregory of Rimini, Ailly, Gerson, and Biel so zealously that he is said to have known Ailly and Biel almost by heart. So he did really know Scholasticism—which is not to say that he always rightly understood, for instance, St. Thomas. But occasional misconceptions in the interpretation of an author are not a sufficient basis for the verdict of "crass ignorance." If they were, one would be forced to stigmatise the erudite Father Denifle himself as crassly ignorant, because he has so often misunderstood Luther. But Luther did not only know Scholasticism: he had "read practically all" St. Augustine, and if not all, still a great deal of Irenaeus, Cyprian, Eusebius, Athanasius, Hilary, Ambrose, Gregory of Nazianzus, Jerome, Dionysius Areopagitica, Cassiodorus, Gregory the Great, Anselm of Canterbury. Also he had studied very closely the edifying literature of Mysticism—Tauler, the Frankfort mystic, Gerhard Zerbolt of Zutphen, Jean Momboir; and had gone very thoroughly into the humanistic theology of Lefèvre, Erasmus and Pico della Mirandola, and the exegetic literature of the Middle Ages. Still better, of course, did he know the canon law, Aristotle, Porphyrius and the mediaeval philosophy. Lastly, he was one of the first German professors to learn Greek and Hebrew, and he sought eagerly and successfully, through the medium of Christian Hebraists, to obtain information from Jews and persons who associated with Jews concerning the Rabbinistic literature and exegesis. Denifle ignores all this, because it does not fit in with his preconceived opinion, and indeed would like to reproach the "crassly ignorant" Luther with the fact that he used no manuscripts and did not think to correct the printing errors in the unsatisfactory Basel edition of the Fathers of the Church, which was the only one at his disposal.

The crass ignoramus, therefore, reveals himself as a very sound and highly respectable scholar. But it is well known that learning alone does not by any means make a good professor. A good professor results only from the union of learning with something higher: the capacity for simple, clear, logical and independent thought, acuteness, perception—in a word, scientific endowment. Did the reformer possess this, too? He himself would perhaps not have said so. As a scholar and teacher he always seemed to himself weak, little, poor, a mere "dish-washer" beside the admirable little man Melancthon. But he had no need whatever to rate himself so low. True, he was not comparable as a humanist to the "Doctor above all Doctors." Just as his handwriting, in the slope and formation of the letters, never lost the hall-mark of the monastic hand of the fifteenth century, his Latin too, lively and natural as it was, always retained a monkish tinge. Nor did he ever attain the same degree of facility as his younger friend in expressing a thought "keenly and shortly" and yet "clearly and richly." But he had by 1513 gradually learned from the humanists all that they could teach him, in the course of his scientific work on the Bible; and in the matter of critical perceptiveness he was at least the equal of the famous Erasmus, and considerably superior to Magister Philippus. Even as a young professor he ventured to pronounce five works handed down under the name of St. Augustine as false, basing his assertion on philological grounds and on the substance of the writings. By this, at least in one case, he excited very unfavourable attention in Wittenberg, and even made some enemies. But later research entirely confirmed his verdict. No less unusual and well-aimed are his celebrated remarks on the style, origin and historical value of the Biblical books. It is true that he follows in many things the judgment of the great Early Christian scholars, Eusebius of Caesarea and Jerome, but he adds a great number of just observations and clear-sighted speculations of his own, and, what is more important, he draws at once, without lengthy pros and cons, the right conclusion from the critical examination: he restricts the canon of the Old Testament to the writings of the Hebrew Bible, and in the New Testament relegates the four old "Antilegomena"—the Epistles of St. James and St. Jude, the Epistle to the Hebrews and the Revelation—to the status of an appendix. As a commentator of the Bible he also performed far more than is generally supposed. He was, if not the first, at least one of the first professors who made a principle of following the original text in the writing of commentaries. Further, as early as 1520 he definitely discredited the ecclesiastical methods of interpretation and in place of these falsely famed arts adopted the "natural, grammatical, historical" method. For it is not for the Church to determine what the Scripture teaches: it is for the Scriptures to determine what the Church shall teach. These are deeds which assure him for all time a place in the history of learning. In the exposition of isolated passages, too, it is an unending astonishment how much he achieved, with the miserable aids at his command; what a fine ear he had even for the philological peculiarities of a text; and with what certainty he could develop not only the religious ideas but also the theological concepts. When we consider in addition the ease and adroitness with which he moved among the most abstract philosophical and theological distinctions; how quickly he mastered not only the theological problems but also the political, legal, social and economic problems with which he came into contact during the progress of the evangelical movement; how swiftly and with how little labour he found a striking and original expression for his thoughts; how easily, thanks to his amazing memory, he retained anything that he read, saw or heard—then we must admit that even regarded purely as an intellectual character, he was a phenomenon that has no equal. Only one gift was granted him in a comparatively slight measure, the very gift he admired so much in Melancthon, and would have admired still more in Calvin had he been better acquainted with that greatest scientific force of Old Protestantism—the gift of subduing the immense abundance of fruitful thoughts which flowed towards him unbidden from all sides as he worked, or even in the lightest conversation, of ordering those thoughts systematically and crystallising them in short formulae.

---

[1] *Table Talk*, No. 200.

These observations alone awaken some mistrust of the recent attempts to represent the reformer as a powerful but unrefined piece of primitive nature, which, suddenly arising from the depths of the people, cast its ruinous weight over the blossoming fields of culture, or as a "simple soul," a semi-civilised "Northerner," who lived out his life "in the snow and mist of un-picturesque Nature, without any deep desire for knowledge or any gleam of artistic sensibility." This primitive nature, this simple soul, was not in reality quite so simple, unrefined and semi-civilised as he appears to the myopic eyes of the modern venerators of culture. In the first place, he possessed the full range of what was then called general culture, and in this, as the lecture-list of Erfurt University shows, much was included which is not to-day demanded of all highly educated men—besides a very thorough schooling in logic, which certainly to our ideas plays far too large a part, general psychology, and special branches of psychology, such as Aristotle's theories on memory and recollection, sleep and waking, also general, spherical and planetary astronomy, meteorology, general mathematics and arithmetic, the theory of music, perspective, natural philosophy (physics), moral philosophy, politics, economics (principles of domestic, municipal and state administration), and metaphysics. Thus he studied science abundantly as a student, for the scientific lectures occupied the largest place in the last three years before the Master's examination; indeed in 1509, as a young Dozent at Wittenberg, he himself once gave a lecture on physics, *i.e.* natural history. Naturally this was all according to Aristotle and the mediaeval commentators of Aristotle. But the word "science" at that time meant these men, and what they offered was indeed science—that is, an attempt to explain the processes of Nature by natural causes. Nothing is more false, therefore, than the belief that Luther never outgrew the so-called naïve conception of the universe of pre-scientific ages. He knew, for instance, as a student, that the earth was a sphere and the smallest of all the stars, that everything on the earth's surface was subject to the force of gravity and that there were such things as "antipodes," that thunderstorms usually, though indeed not always, arose in a natural manner, and that astrology and alchemy could hardly be designated by the name of science; he could also give proofs of these statements—that is, *observations* upon which even then they were based. His scientific knowledge, then, was quite up to the then existing level of education when he became a professor. The fact that he clung all his life to the Aristotelian conception of the universe, and therefore once at supper, in June 1539, rejected the "new astrologer" Copernicus, whom he had only heard talked of incidentally by his companions at the table in a casual conversation, with the brief argument, "Joshua bade the *sun* stand still at Gibeon and not the earth,"[1] is by no means a proof that he was altogether incapable of scientific thought. What man of middle age to-day, in matters remote from his particular sphere of work and interest, can immediately grasp new ideas and theories which seem to overturn all that was handed down to him in his youth as science? It is in any case far more remarkable that the reformer later broke with the scientific views of his Erfurt teachers in at least one important point—the doctrine of the eleven or twelve Heavens, which they still brought forward as scientific truth, but which he regarded as a mere supposition, beautiful in many ways, but on the whole somewhat childish.[2] The affirmation that God has His appointed dwelling-place in the last fiery heaven—the "toy Heaven such as we describe to children, and as the painters depict it"—seems to him utterly ludicrous.[3] God is everywhere, in every grain of corn, and yet within, above and around all creatures. Nothing is so small but He is smaller. Nothing is so great but He is greater. Nothing is so short, so long, so broad, so narrow, but He is shorter, longer, broader, narrower.[1] Therefore the Christian may be in Heaven or in Hell while he is yet on earth. For to be in Heaven means nothing more than to have God, and to be ruled by God, and to be in Hell, no more than to hate God, to curse God and to suffer the fearful torments of despair and the pains of conscience. It is in harmony with this attitude that he *knows* very much less about the world beyond the grave than Thomas Aquinas or even Augustine, reserved though the latter was in such matters. Naturally he has all kinds of thoughts about it. But he is always conscious that we can speak of these mysteries only in images and metaphors, as we speak to children, and he regards the highest and surest blessing of the glory to come as living in eternal righteousness and perfect loving devotion and submission to God. If this is considered and if it is further realised what a revolution he brought about in the thoughts of his time by his radical condemnation of the idea of Purgatory, it can hardly be maintained that he simply held to the mediaeval conception of the universe, and that the Reformation contributed nothing whatever to the evolution of a new conception. It is only necessary to compare Loyola's utterances upon Heaven, Purgatory and Hell with these utterances of Luther's to recognise how erroneous this widespread view is. Almost more important is the fact that the reformer as a pupil of the Erfurt Occamists allows human reason a far greater freedom of movement in all material things, including the study of nature, than for instance the orthodox Thomists, who in the sixteenth century regained control of the Catholic Church in such questions; and that he shows a far greater interest not only in history, but in all the exact sciences, than did the humanists, absorbed only in formal education, who later set the tone of the Protestant universities. But naturally languages and history lie nearer to him than the other "noble arts and sciences." Therefore he furthers the humanistic reform of schools and universities in all possible ways, and follows Melancthon's lead so faithfully that we may say with certainty that without him this reform would at least not have penetrated so rapidly in the Protestant countries as it did.

---

[1] *Table Talk*, No. 4638.

[2] *Werke*, xlii, p. 22.

[3] *Ibid*. xxiii, pp. 131 ff.

---

[1] *Werke*, xxvi, p. 339.

The prevailing standard of culture to-day, however, is not interest in learning, but understanding of plastic art and poetry. Music, even in music-loving Germany, is still not considered absolutely indispensable to "aesthetic education," because other nations have not much use for it, and because musicians as a rule do not spend time philosophising about aesthetic education. If we apply this standard to the reformer, the verdict that he was without a gleam of artistic sensibility seems in truth not too severe. He is known to have spent four whole weeks in Rome, but "he passed by the antique statues, and all the old and new wonders of the Eternal City, with closed eyes. He recollects indeed the Belvedere, adorned with its statues, and the Campo di Fiore with its beautiful fountain, but only to remind his hearers on what kind of thing the money of Christendom is squandered in Rome. What were to him the Apollo Belvedere and the Laocoon?" Indeed, this seems a weighty accusation. But before repeating this widely current opinion, surely one should consider the question whether the "strict monk" was in a position to undertake aesthetic studies in the Eternal City at all. The answer is, quite simply, No. In the first place, he could not wander about Rome entirely at his own free will. He was naturally, like all monks, bound to observe the strict rules of the house in which he was quartered, the monastery of Santa Maria del Popolo, and had every day to perform at least a part of the very lengthy and fatiguing choir service. In the second place, he naturally only saw what the Roman brothers showed him; and they showed him principally those wonders of Rome which were of interest to pilgrims—the catacombs at St. Sebastian, the seven churches of the pilgrimage, the Scala Santa at the Lateran, and other famous places where miraculous relics were deposited. Thirdly, of the other wonders of the city, there was little or nothing that he was able to see at all. The "Belvedere adorned with its statues"—the adornment, incidentally, probably then consisted of *three* statues—was closed to the public, and such antique statues as were visible in the streets and squares belonged rather to the category of archaeological curiosities than to the exclusive circle of monuments of the first rank, marked with a star or a double star. Lastly, the paintings and sculpture which are brought to mind by the magic word Renaissance, St. Peter's, the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, the frescos in the stances and loggias of the Vatican, the tomb of Julius II, the Farnesina, the Palazzo Farnese, the Sybils in Santa Maria della Pace and so on, were then either not in existence or only in process of being made; or if they were completed—as, for instance, the Borgia Apartments or the mural paintings of the Sistine—they were absolutely inaccessible to such ordinary mortals as the monk Luther. The Rome with which he became acquainted in January 1511 was still an ugly, tortuous, thoroughly mediaeval city of about 40,000 inhabitants, outwardly distinguishable from other cities of equal size only by the gigantic fields of ruins which bordered it on the south and east, and in places stretched deep into the inhabited quarters. But what he was able to see and undoubtedly did see of the great wonders of this dead city, and the much smaller wonders of the new Rome—the Pantheon, the Colosseum, the Thermes of Diocletian, the Cancellaria—can be proved to have impressed him, and impressed him deeply. Certainly, the contemplation of these marvels seems not to have moved him to the ecstasy prescribed as obligatory in the guide-books, any more than the sight of the old Basilica of St. Peter, already half destroyed by the "ruinante" Bramante, or the Cathedrals of Cologne or Ulm, of which later he found nothing to say except that they were quite unsuitable for the holding of services on account of their bad acoustics.[1] Nevertheless, it cannot be said that he was entirely lacking in the artistic sense. He observed, for example, how well the Italian painters render natural life and the play of gestures, and how beautifully the colours stand out in the pictures of the Dutch School. Nor was it entirely beyond his experience how men come to paint pictures. He states that he himself, when he thinks for instance of Christ, quite involuntarily calls up in his heart a picture of a man hanging on the Cross,[1] and when he speaks of Paul, imagines the Apostle as a "poor, thin little man, like Magister Philippus." In consequence he regards it as sheer stupidity to forbid painting or banish images from the churches and houses. He believes, on the contrary, that there are not too many but too few images. If princes and rich people would adorn their houses, outside and inside, with pictures from Biblical history, it would be a Christian work.[2] Nor has he anything to say against images of saints, provided they are not worshipped as ostensibly wonder-working "idols." He even liked to have "such idolatrous images" in his own home, as for instance an image of Mary with the infant Jesus. He seems to have had less interest in sculpture, though he often praises the beauty of the human form and accounts it a great merit in the Italian tailors that they fit their clothes to the human body, whereas the Germans mould all breeches on one model, so that their customers look "like ruffled pigeons" about the legs.

---

[1] *Table Talk*, No. 3781.

All this, admittedly, does not involve any mature understanding of art. Above all, Luther, like all his contemporaries, even such artistic natures as Albrecht Dürer, had no suspicion that art might be an end in itself. He took it for granted that art had an aim, and a very high aim —to serve the revelation of the Gospel. He himself occasionally made use of it for this purpose. He sought out a number of pictures for the September Bible of 1522. Later he published his Catechism also with pictures, thereby giving great satisfaction to the artists who contributed. For the artists of those days felt themselves in no wise demeaned by such didactic tasks, but on the contrary greatly honoured. They rejoiced at the opportunity of doing a "Christian work" and therefore strove to give of their very best in such work. As to whether they always succeeded, opinions may of course vary a great deal. But one thing remains certain, that such a dull, pedagogic conception of art may well be united with a pure joy in artistic creations. This joy, particularly a joy in charming characteristic pictures, Dr. Martinus always possessed.

---

[1] *Werke*, xviii, p. 83.

[2] *Ibid.*

The reformer's attitude towards poetry was entirely similar. Though he esteemed it chiefly as an admirable medium of instruction, he nevertheless loved it and cultivated it also, as he confesses himself, because "poems moved him more powerfully, delighted him more deeply and imprinted themselves on his mind more strongly than any ordinary speech—though it were that of a Demosthenes or Cicero." Hence his delight not only in the fables of Aesop, and the popular wisdom of proverbs, of which he made a little collection for his own use, but also in poems which were not immediately didactic, such as the songs of Dietrich von Bern and "other giants." It is for the same reason that he himself took such pleasure in the making of verses—even while engaged in such prosaic occupations as reckoning up his expenditure on cattle, buildings, etc.; and though as a poet he usually pursued instructive ends,[1] and therefore as a rule translated existing hymns from the Latin or put into verse pieces of the Catechism or the Liturgy or particular Psalms, nevertheless in the course of this work, which like all other work was primarily to serve in the edification of the Christian community, he was often so much carried away that he almost entirely forgot his original aim and involuntarily expressed, in a powerful flood of words, simply what he felt in the depths of his soul. It happened more rarely that he, like other poets, was so stirred by outer experiences that his inward excitement flowed from his lips in verse as of itself. On these occasions he wrote straight from his heart in the old popular style, and he then produced new *Lieder*, such as the "Lay of the Martyrs of Brussels," which for that period have no equal in force, sincerity and simplicity of expression. But as a rule in such moments of strong emotion, like a true Thuringian, he seized not the pen but the lute, and sang, or let another sing to him.

---

[1] The majority of Luther's *geistliche Lieder* are not religious *poèmes de circonstance*, but poems intended for use in the divine service. Only one of the 37 which we know can be called a *poème de circonstance* in the strict sense of the term: the *Neues Lied auf die Martyrer* (Johann Esche and Heinrich Voes, burnt in Brussels, July 1, 1523), his earliest *Lied*, printed first as a pamphlet. The remainder are either German versions of the Psalms (Psalms 12, 14, 46, 67, 130, 128), versions of mediaeval Catholic hymns, verses based on particular parts of the Liturgy, or quite unpretentious versifications such as the two *Lieder* on the Ten Commandments and the version of the Lord's Prayer. Apart from the *Märtyrerlied* the only verses written by Luther entirely without a model were the song, also printed first as a pamphlet (1523), "*Nun freut euch lieben Christen-Gmein,*" "*Vom Himmel hoch da komm' ich her*" (1535), "*Vom Himmel kam der Engel Schar*" (1542), and "*Erhalt uns Herr bei Deinem Wort*" (1543). "*Ein'feste Burg*" was written in 1527 or 1528. To seek for the especial occasion for the composition of this poem, conceived throughout as a song for the divine service, is lost labour, *cf.* Lucke in *Lutherstudien*, pp. 79 ff. The much-discussed words in verse 4: "*und kein Dank dazu haben*" mean "whether they will or not." The expression is a not altogether happy invention of Luther's own, based on the old idiom "ohne jemandes Dank," *i.e.* without anyone's wish, *cf.* O. Brenner, *ibid.*, pp. 72 ff. Recently Ehwald discovered in Gotha a poem of the reformer's on Friedrich der Weise.

For music was to him of all the gifts of God the highest and most precious, saving only God's Word—the soul's comforter, which unfailingly "revived him and delivered him from sore distress," so that "his heart overflowed" if he but thought of it. This love was older even than his love of God's Word: it was indeed his oldest love of all. For it went back to his earliest youth. After the custom of the time, he had for thirteen or fourteen long years, at the Trivial School, enjoyed a very thorough instruction in singing and had also been abundantly exercised in the art of musicography, now despised, but not replaced as a means of musical education by any modern invention; so that he was completely at home in the technical mysteries of composition. But this musical instruction, valuable as it undoubtedly was in spite of its one-sidedness, would never have made him a musician had he not possessed such a pronounced leaning towards music. In consequence he did not, like most schoolboys, on leaving school abandon this study which had become so dear to him, but went on learning uninterruptedly, as a student and as a monk. For at the monastery also he found no lack of opportunity. His foremost interest was always in vocal music. In instrumental music he engaged but little. Whereas Zwingli, the man of a thousand arts, ended by having complete command of no less than thirteen instruments, Luther contented himself with learning only one, the lute. It will be seen from this that the purely mechanical side of music attracted him far less than the strictly musical side—tone, and the melodic and contrapuntal exploitation of tone. Contrapuntal polyphony seemed to him the most wonderful thing on earth,[1] but it was only such a wonder to him because he perfectly understood the most difficult piece in no matter how many parts, and was able to follow the "joyous play and dance of the voices" so well that he did not fail to note the slightest of the many refinements, only intended for well-schooled ears, in which the Dutch contrapuntalists, so much revered by him, particularly distinguished themselves. But he had no use for learned preciosities even in the music of cultivated artists,[2] and highly as he thought of this *Kunstmusik*, he ever loved and practised the music of the people. When in later times, at the supper table, he arranged private concerts with his children and guests, as he loved to do, they would perform not only the difficult motets of Josquin des Prés, De la Rue and Senfl, but also many a secular folk-song which he prized for its "warmth." It is hardly necessary to say that in after years he not only spent many hours in copying and correcting music, but also tried his own hand at composition. As to what he accomplished in this way, we are not sufficiently enlightened. He himself had no conceit of his capacity in this point, and it seems as if we should not disagree with his judgment. For the only chorale which can be attributed to him with certainty, "Ein' feste Burg," is "woven together of Gregorian reminiscences." Even this discovery, however, proves how great a musician he was. For no one, hearing the melody, can perceive its interesting antecedents, so completely had he succeeded in creating from disconnected fragments a new whole, and therefore, in a sense, something wholly new.

---

[1] *Werke*, l., p. 372 f.

[2] *Table Talk*, No. 4897.

But we can only do justice to Luther the musician if we consider what he did in this capacity for the church services. He was not, indeed, the first to introduce congregational singing, but he was the first to give it a secure place in the service. Further, in spite of many dissuasive voices, he not only left the *Kunstmusik* its former position in the service, but assigned it new tasks which assured it a tremendous further development. From the German chorale, which according to his arrangement [1] was to be sung before the Gospel, there evolved in the sixteenth century the anthem; from the anthem, which with its alternating texts attracted all the interest of musicians, the musical sermon or cantata. All the marvellous evolution of Lutheran church music, from Johann Walther to Johann Sebastian Bach, would thus have been impossible had not the father of Lutheranism been, as a great musician says, himself an artist. Everyone who knows anything of music will therefore be unfailingly astonished that even German historians of civilisation have so far overlooked this fact almost without exception. Even they, absorbed in the artistic achievements of the Renaissance Popes, whose guiding motive is invariably the mere glorification of their own persons or the heightening of the *splendor ecclesiae*, entirely forget the artistic achievements of Luther the artist—achievements far less striking to the eye, indeed, and destined to contribute not to his own renown or the *splendor ecclesiae*, but to the reverence and edification particularly of tempted and tormented souls. Even they still fail to realise how the sweat and tears of shamelessly plundered peoples hang about those much-prized monuments of the Renaissance, and how many millions of human beings, consoled by Luther's old songs, have sanctified them with their tears of joy and gratitude. In consequence, they still cannot understand that Luther and his musical disciples did better service to the culture of the soul, which is after all the soul of culture, than those unscrupulous despots and sensualists whose contributions never meant anything to the poor in wealth and in mind, who nevertheless have need of culture even as the rest of humanity.

---

[1] *Werke*, xix, p. 90.

But we are not entirely acquainted with Luther the artist until we have bestowed some attention on Luther the observer. Once in 1538 he described a hospital he visited in Florence: "Every patient on entering must take off his clothes, and they are at once given into the keeping of an official. He is then clothed in a white smock, laid in a beautifully painted, freshly-made bed, and examined by two physicians. Servants bring him food and drink on a tray in perfectly clean glass vessels, which they do not touch with a finger, and noble ladies, heavily veiled, take turns in attending him." So clearly does he still, after twenty-seven years, see this "palace" and the special mode of life that went on there. Still more often does he surprise us with such precise details when relating exciting events of his life. The peasant who frightened him and the other two Mansfeld schoolboys so much, when they were singing for their supper, had two sausages in his hand. Cardinal Cajetan hastily opened the book of canon law and read, snorting with excitement, till he came to the passage: "Christ has accumulated a treasury." Without weapons, without spurs, dressed only in knee-breeches, cowl, shirt, cloak and hat, did he flee that time from Augsburg on a hard-trotting horse, and in Nuremberg, unable to walk or stand, fell in a heap in the straw. On the evening of May 4, 1521, as his carriage was driving through a hollow road in the neighbourhood of the Glasbach, "a gigantic fellow came suddenly like a cavalryman from the forest and wheeled his nag round. Immediately two others appeared out of the forest and got in front of the carriage. The first began to shout at the driver, and seizing his crossbow struck his horse down. Another fitted an arrow to his bow, and pointed it at Luther: he must give himself up as prisoner. Then, cursing blasphemously, the two riders pushed their captive in front of them along the road to Brotterode." Thus, even in moments of agitation, he involuntarily takes a mental photograph of the situation, and, more remarkable still, he sees himself in the picture too. His "awareness" is thus always active, though he is neither hunter nor soldier, but monk, professor and preacher, and thus decidedly an indoor man, who has to deal all the time with ideas, and ideas of the most abstract kind. It is owing to this faculty that even the most worn-out metaphors immediately call up a perceptible image in his mind. On April 18 the official at Worms demands of him a *responsum non cornutum*, which in the school language of the time means nothing more than an unequivocal reply (Ducange). This expression, certainly not very frequently used, at once reminds him of the special usage of the student "deposition," in which, among other things, horns are put on and taken off the fox, and an enormous tooth is extracted, and rejoins at once: "I will give an answer that has neither horns nor teeth."

After this it is hardly necessary to say that his attitude to Nature is also not that of an indoor man or a monk, with "dull paralysed senses," or of a melancholy old Northerner, deeply sensitive only to those phenomena of Nature which weigh down the spirit. Much as he reckons with the evil machinations of Satan in forest and field, like all his contemporaries, Nature in itself is not on that account a frightening mystery to him, still less a grey, chaotic waste of snow, mist and northern darkness, but a green pleasure-garden, full of sunshine and the clear song of birds and a thousand great and small miracles of God, like his native Thuringia, in which the sternly-repressed boy first learned to look around him with a glad spirit and throve into a lively, cheerful young man. His feeling for Nature betrays the true Thuringian no less than his conception of Nature. Singing-birds are especially dear to his heart, as they still are to all genuine children of the forest. He watches the play of the "comely" stags and roes with reverent delight, and whenever he can goes out into the open air, or follows the merry huntsmen into the wood—not to murder the innocent beasts, but to look on the wonders of God in the green solitude, or, hearing the cry of the stag, to meditate on the Psalm: "As the hart pants after the waters . . ." Whoever would rightly understand him should therefore not only seek him in the church, the judgment hall and his own little room, not only observe him when he talks and writes, jests with his wife and children, discusses with his guests, or in a quiet moment patches his own breeches with a piece ruthlessly cut off "Hänsich's" jerkin; he must also follow him through woods and fields and walk beside him in the garden and court of the Black Monastery. There the mighty man, who has perhaps just before been raging violently against the Pope "as with a peasant's axe," may be seen sowing and weeding, budding and grafting, and with the fervour of a born gardener studying the development in particular of his "rareties," the Erfurt giant radishes, the orange-trees and laurel-bushes, mulberry-trees and fig-trees; or, innocently as a child, playing with the little dog Tölpel, or meditatively considering the chicks just out of their shells, or the comfortable still-life of the pigs in Frau Käthe's yard, or reverently watching the bees at the hive gathering honey, or birds building their nests in the bushes. And always one has the impression that he is not only meditating, but all the time observing too, and observing closely and accurately. It is therefore not surprising that he possesses the gift of seeing whatever he thinks of there in front of him, and is able to render even impressions of Nature so clearly and completely by image and metaphor, by leisurely description or fleeting jest. His method indeed is never that of an artist, for he never sets out consciously to reproduce form and emotion in a definite way; but it is yet artistic, for he does unconsciously reproduce them—a faculty which must always be regarded as particularly meritorious in a "Northerner." For how often, among Northern races, the artistic tendency is ruined by reflection and self-conscious training! How often the ability to see with one's own eyes is suppressed or completely annihilated by an inculcated respect for the visual habits of other races!

In despite of all this, the "unrefined barbarian" Luther is, it appears, no arbitrary invention of the polemical spirit. As a writer and conversationalist Luther is held, even by unprejudiced minds, to merit no other designation. Indeed, "unrefined barbarian" is apparently too modest an expression. Licentious churl, muck-rake, dung-finch, mountebank, filthy slanderer, vulgar buffoon, literary pimp and pornographer—such expressions, we are assured by a whole army of impassioned judges, bring us considerably nearer the truth. The literary work left by Luther, it is maintained, sufficiently justifies these honourable titles, but it is hardly necessary to search his works and letters for evidence, for such evidence offers itself in overwhelming abundance in a source widely current and much read in cheap popular editions, a source which *seems* to show us the reformer in his everyday guise, free from pose and embellishment: the famous "Table Talk." Modern research has made a very close study of this source, and has resolved, not all, but many of the difficult riddles which it presents to the historian. The conclusions arrived at interest us only in so far as they help to answer the question. Is it really from the "Table Talk" that we can best learn to know the true Luther?

From the late fifteen-twenties onward, every evening at 5 o'clock, a regular Round Table assembled around the reformer in the Black Monastery. The knights of this Round Table bore indeed no high names; they were, for the most part, older students, who obtained board and lodging in the house. Some belonged to the outskirts of the family circle, either as *famuli* of the Doctor or tutors to the children; the rest consisted of boarders whom the Frau Doktorin had taken into the house that she, too, might earn something. It was one of these boarders, Konrad Cordatus, of Weisskirchen, in Austria, who first had the idea of noting down the Doctor's table talk actually during the meal itself. This was in the summer of 1531. As the Doctor raised no objections, this example was immediately imitated. In consequence the Round Table often exactly resembled a university class; so industriously were the conversations of the Doctor and his companions written down in little note-books by Johann Schlaginhaufen, Veit Dietrich, Rörer, Lauterbach, Hieronymus Weller, the melancholy tutor of little Hans, and, from the beginning of the 'forties, Johann Mathesius, Kaspar Heydenreich, Hieronymus Besold, Johann Aurifaber, and many others. But soon they ceased to be content with mere note-taking. In many cases they made fair copies of what they had written, supplemented the brief guiding phrases from memory, and filled out their notes into reports of a more literary style. These copies they exchanged frequently among themselves, and one or two especially ardent collectors began, even in the Doctor's lifetime, to arrange their collections according to the subject-matter. None of the older members of the company, however, at first thought of publishing their collectanea in print. They took delight in their treasure and willingly imparted it to the Doctor's venerators, but they made no attempt to make it accessible to the great public, feeling rightly that the reformer himself would not have approved of this. Only Johann Aurifaber, the Doctor's last *famulus*, who also did quite a little trade in Luther relics, felt it no robbery to procure fame and money with his copies. His large edition of the "Table Talk," in 1566, had indeed such a great and immediate success that soon other enterprising *littérateurs* published collections of table talk of the same kind and of the same value. Was this success deserved? The answer can only be, No. Aurifaber could only employ notes of his own for the years 1545–46. But even these he did not by any means render faithfully. He translated the mixture of German and Latin which was spoken at Luther's table into his own broad rich German, and as he himself was a very coarse fellow, he did not fail to underline any coarseness that occurred in it. In the same way he worked up the notes of other, older guests, but where did he obtain these? Not from the originals or first-hand copies, but from second- and third-hand collectanea, in which the conversations had already been re-touched to a greater or less extent. In addition to this he was also a very careless and entirely uncritical editor. His edition of the "Table Talk" is therefore a very impure source, and no one accustomed to the fresh water of genuine information can drink of it without reluctance. But is it possible for us, in this case, to arrive at the genuine information? In the last few decades the collectanea of some of the older guests have been made accessible to us, the notes of Cordatus, Lauterbach, Schlaginhaufen, Mathesius, Veit Dietrich, Weller and others. But not one of these collections, even that of Veit Dietrich, always reproduces faithfully the *original* manuscript; the three best are only copies of those modest little exercise-books in which the table companions hastily entered the Doctor's words. Besides this, even the most trustworthy of the many industrious companions, Rörer, Lauterbach, Mathesius, despite their active pens, were not proof against mishearing or misunderstanding even in making the original notes. In particular they were often unable to follow the Doctor's swift speech. In these cases, since for the Latin language a kind of shorthand was then known, they translated what they heard straight into Latin, even if the conversation had been carried on entirely in German. Even the best witnesses cannot therefore be regarded as entirely trustworthy reporters. But even if we must always use critical judgment in taking their evidence, the fact remains that they have preserved for us a remarkably large amount of valuable data upon Luther's life, actions and opinions. They offer us information which is true in essentials, in strict chronological order, which indeed brings the real Luther not nearer, but often almost as near to us as his own letters and works.

If now, guided by these good witnesses, we join the Round Table in the Black Monastery, the feeling may indeed often come over us that we have wandered into a guard-room by mistake, so coarse, so low, so crude and even gross does the tone of the conversation seem. If we are not frightened off from further study, but follow the Doctor into his *Stüblein*, to watch him writing his books in peace, our astonishment may well be transformed into mild horror. The more merrily the old man's work goes forward, the more coarse, apparently, he becomes. He writes against the Papacy in Rome, founded by the devil, in a tone which mocks at all decent upbringing, and composes verses, to accompany satirical pictures against the Papacy, which to-day would certainly attract the fatherly attention of the police to him. If, then, hoping to recover a little, we glance through the address against Hans Worst of Brunswick, the effect is perhaps still worse. The old man uses indecent expressions of an anatomical nature so frequently and unrestrainedly that the brain reels. Also he keeps for polemical purposes a whole menagerie into which he pitilessly thrusts his opponents. For he is very fond of borrowing Circe's magic staff and changing them unexpectedly into pigs, asses, wolves, bears, goats, dogs, apes, sheep, oxen, cows, etc.; and treats them as if they were, indeed, those excellent beasts. He does not fence with them like an elegant *littérateur* of the twentieth century; he drives them off with the swine-stick like wild pigs, or beats them like a rough peasant with the threshing-flail, pitilessly and without ever flagging. In short he is, when his blood is heated by strong anger, a writer of obscenities, it would seem without equal. But it is not only within his own four walls, in the living-room and the study, that he behaves with such unschooled coarseness. Even in the pulpit he uses the most primitively frank images and expressions, even in the pulpit his speech is full of medical allusions, and medical allusions to things which indeed everyone knows, but which, to-day at least, nobody speaks of in public.

It is therefore all the more surprising that the honest Mathesius declares that Luther never indulged in indecent conversation, and that the well-known humanist and historian, Sleidan, described those obscene pictures of Cranach's in mockery of the Papacy, of 1545, as calmly and cheerfully as if he were referring to one of the harmless professorial satires in the pamphlets. It seems, then, that to understand this tone we must again give ear to the spirit of the times. If we do this, if we wish ourselves 350 years back, we soon realise that the tone prevailing at Luther's table and in his writings is not in the least contrary to the tone of good society in Germany, nor yet in France, England, or even Italy. The familiar phrase, "What is natural is nothing to be ashamed of," has hardly ever been followed so literally, even by the highest persons (as, for instance, Pope Julius II), as in those outspoken times. Things which everybody knew of, it was held, could be discussed out loud with anyone, even in the presence of modest womanhood. For the modest womanhood of that time possessed the delicacy of feeling of a modern Hamburg fish-wife. The humanist Scheurl, on taking up his rectorship, was allowed to make a speech before the ladies of the Court which to-day the lowest woman would object to hearing. The pious and delicately sensitive Queen Margaret of Navarre wrote tales which to-day no decent woman can read without blushing. Elizabeth of England, the Virgin Queen, would sit through such a coarse comedy as the "Merry Wives of Windsor" with hearty enjoyment; indeed she expressed no disapproval when her sailors greeted her with the appellation, not perhaps entirely false, but certainly impolite: "Good morning, old whore!" And the men! When the famous preacher, Geiler of Kaisersberg, compares the perfect Christian with a well-made sausage, when he esteems Christ as our pack-ass, which carries our sins away to the dung-heap, we can perhaps, at a pinch, endure these strong comparisons. But the easy way in which the said Geiler and other famous preachers of the time, such as the Westphalian Gottschalk Hollen, discuss in the pulpit the intimacies of conjugal life, and the very extraordinary jokes and anecdotes with which they flavour their sermons, make a very strange impression on us. Yet these preachers seem almost prudish if the reader then turns to the so-called *belles-lettres* of the eighteenth century. The *Volksbücher*, the carnival plays, the satires of Thomas Murner are not only gross but dirty, and the humanistic literature is not only dirty but wantonly licentious. After this it is no longer surprising that the respectable Master Dürer embroiders his letters to Pirckheimer with such uncommonly vulgar jokes, that a family history such as the *Zimmersche Chronik*, essentially a most serious work, simply teems with ribald anecdotes, and that even the principal Latin school-book of the day, the *Colloquia* of Erasmus, is conceived in this key. For the good manners of the sixteenth century were, to our ideas, not good manners at all. Just as people in general were far from clean in their methods of eating and drinking—forks and napkins were not yet generally used—unparticular as they were about fleas, lice, and other vermin, scabies and other filthy diseases, so they were, to our ideas, universally unclean in their literary habits.

From this coarse and primitively gross generation Martin Luther sprang, to this coarse generation he spoke, and with this coarse generation he had to measure himself in his struggles. For his literary antagonists, Prierias, Alveld, Eck, Cochlaeus, Usingen, Mensing, Sylphius, Konrad Köllin, Karlstadt, Zwingli and whatever else their names may be, were no wit more polite than he. Some of them indeed, such as Cochlaeus, were simply dirty and frivolous, whereas he, strong though his expressions were, was never frivolous. There is also another thing to be considered. Whenever strong anger heats his blood the humorous writer stirs in him. He cannot shake his fist at an adversary without constantly making fun of him and joking with him unrestrainedly. Thus Dr. Emser, because he has a goat in his coat-of-arms, at once becomes himself a goat, the highly erudite Cochlaeus (*cochlea* = snail; *cochlear* = spoon) appears suddenly as Rotzlöffel (snotty), Dr. Eck as Dr. Geck (fool) or Dreck (muck), the Ritter Schwenckfeld as Herr von Stenkfeld (stinkfield), Dr. Usingen as Dr. Unsingen, Dr. Crotus as Dr. Kröte (toad), the Franciscan Schatzgeyer as Master Schatzfresser (treasure-eater), the Franciscan Alveld as the miller's grey ass that always cries "Ika, Ika," Duke Heinrich of Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel as Jack Pudding, as sausage-devil, as a cow on a walnut-tree, as a sow twangling on a harp, the jurists as ignorists, nequists, plank-doctors—for they cure everything with gallows-wood—and Dr. N. Buch as a poodle whose coat is crawling and swarming with fleas, his "book" being full, not of printing-errors, but thinking-errors. But the reformer has a very special preference for bringing "her serene highness the white beast," the sow, on to the scene. How the dear creature gorges itself, licks its chops and scrapes in the muck, how it snorts and grunts, how it spends its mild, safe, quiet life snoring away on its "down feather bed," how it laughs through its nose at the piglets—all this he observes very prettily; but for polemical purposes he sometimes teaches the sow special tricks. It appears like a clown now with a lemon in its mouth, now with a string of pearls round its neck, now wearing a coat of mail, now with a spinning-wheel, now with a harp. Luther the polemical writer cannot therefore be understood at all unless one has a feeling for the humour of the sixteenth century. This humour was not a subtle humour. In Luther's hands it often turns very rudely against his own person, for often enough he mocks at himself unsparingly as "fat Doctor," "lazy stinking carcase," and "sack full of rotten flesh." But in spite of all its wild somersaults it never, in his case, takes the form of obscenity for its own sake as it does with Emser, Cochlaeus and Lemnius. Luther may indeed be cited as a proof that a German can be coarse and vulgar to the point of grossness, without ever becoming wantonly licentious.

But did he not once frankly advise a melancholy man to let himself be restored to good spirits by obscenity? Did he not write to Joachim von Anhalt on May 23, 1534: "Mirth amid good, pious people, in honour and decency and the fear of God, even if there be a word or *Zötlein* too many, pleases God well"? Indeed, those are the words of the letter. But the context itself shows that *Zötlein* has not the same meaning as the modern *Zote*. If for further information we open a German dictionary—for instance, the extensively used work of Daniel Sanders—we find not only definite confirmation of this guess, but also a string of quotations proving that *Zote* as used by Luther means simply drollery, anecdote, joke, idle chatter. This one experiment is enough to teach us that we must go carefully when quoting from Luther. His German must always be first translated into modern German. For not only the meaning but also the flavour of a word has often, with the passing of time, changed considerably. Words such as Luther used were not considered in the least indelicate in the sixteenth century, and expressions like "you sheep" or "you ass" were not taken to imply any serious insult even in polite society. Luther, for instance, quite calmly sent these words to press: "I am a sheep and shall always be a sheep." "I am a goose beside the Cardinal and a miserable sheep beside the jurists." And in presence of the assembled Round Table he once bestowed on his prince, the stout Johann Friedrich, the great praise: "He works like an ass."

But even when we have quite acclimatised ourselves to the taste and literary usages of the sixteenth century, and allow all honour to Luther as a humorist, we cannot always suppress a feeling of surprise at the tone of his polemics, and this feeling is not merely a lingering effect of modern squeamishness, for it is to be met with here and there among his contemporaries. Not only Melancthon, who was not altogether free from the old-maidishness of a bookish scholar, but also Katharina von Bora, who cannot be accused of squeamishness, found the Doctor too coarse at times. Far more frequently do we hear complaints from friends and foes over his unbridled violence. Mosellan shows up this fault as early as 1519 in an otherwise very well-disposed report on the Leipzig Disputation. From the beginning of 1520 onwards Spalatin had constantly to reprove him on the old Elector's behalf, for the same tendency, and Wenzel Link in August 1520 even drove him to the admission: "Almost everyone reproaches me for mordacity." This shows that he was himself quite conscious of the defect. In fact, he at times laments his violent spirit and excessively sharp style; indeed he once brought himself to confess at Worms before the Emperor and the Diet that he had been more violent in his attacks on private persons than was becoming. But this self-knowledge did not help him to mend. He still remained all his life long a choleric fellow. And indeed, in the tremendous tension and excitement of the endless fight, he came to feel a good strong anger as a beneficent relief. "Then my whole blood," he admits, "is refreshed, my mind becomes clear and keen, and temptations weaken." Every temperamental person will be able to sympathise with him in this. But it was not without danger that every such excitement immediately awakened his mighty lust for work and combat. Even as an old man he would seize his pen as if rejuvenated, usually in the heat of the first fury, to work this good, strong anger straight off his heart. Nor did he as a rule wait for a quiet hour in which to examine calmly what he had written; as soon as he began to write he began to print at once, so that the new book was always nearly ready for publication by the time he had written the last words and enjoyed his good anger to its last breath.

This peculiar method of working helps to explain the incomparable freshness and infectious emotional force with which the reformer, even in the writings of his suffering old age, astonishes the reader; but it is also largely to blame for the extreme violence of his polemics. What an author of colder temperament would immediately suppress, Luther pours forth without caution or consideration. As a rule, certainly, when he is striking about him with the peasant's axe like a rough wood-cutter, all the sparks of his wit begin to play at the same time, and he jests with his enemy with a bear-like humour, a rough merriment reminiscent of the wild, pugnacious heroes of the old saga. But occasionally his wrath is so great that he seizes phrases from the Bible, which must not be interpreted literally. "If the rage of the Romanists continues thus unabated," he writes at the end of May 1521, certainly only in Latin, in his hastily dashed-off reply to the "Epitome" of Prierias, with verbal reference to Psalm lvii. 11,[1] "then there is nothing left save that the

---

[1] The just shall rejoice when he shall see the revenge; he shall wash his hands in the blood of the sinner (shattered by God), and man will say: . . . There is indeed a God that judgeth them on earth. (Vulgate.)

Emperor, the kings and princes should attack this pest with force of arms. . . . If we punish thieves with the gallows, robbers with the sword, heretics with the stake, why do we not attack these cardinals and Popes and the whole Roman Sodom with all our arms and wash our hands in their blood ?" Almost more violent are the images in which he revels in his last work against the Papacy, and in his verses written for Cranach's satirical woodcuts of 1545, which he himself considered too coarse. There he tumbles over himself like an uproarious soldier, in grotesque ideas and similes touching His Hellishness St. Paul III, Paul's little daughter, the sainted virgin Paula, and those "epicurean pigs" the cardinals. These strong expressions in which he delights and these gruesome visions which he conjures up so frequently must naturally not be read as definite threats, any more than the outbursts of an angry man are understood as threats. Also, it must not be forgotten that an anger of this kind, which storms away at the writing-table but is never carried to the point of cruel actions, is not on the same plane as the cold-blooded hatred which slowly tortures its victim to death. Nevertheless, it was an honest and genuine hatred, no less genuine than the tender affection, the kindness, the fatherly gentleness which this violent man also showed to so many worthy and unworthy objects. For it has its roots in the notion, drawn from his own impressions and the reports of other visitors to Rome, that the Roman Curia was the breeding-ground of the most criminal vices and of complete atheism, and at the same time an organised band of robbers, which must be treated as relentlessly as robbers, murderers, prostitutes, adulterers and violators of boys in one's own country. This notion must always be kept in mind in considering these outbreaks of titanic anger, for otherwise one is unable to imagine what the old man felt at such moments, and one may even regard this perpetual storming against the Pope as the product of a childish party hatred.

Persons of such powerful temperament are always incapable of judging their opponents coolly, objectively and fairly. This is an old experience. But it is contrary to all usual experience that the reformer becomes increasingly passionate with advancing years, so that his last polemics are also the coarsest and most furious. For as a rule the excitability of youth abates so much with age that the tumultuous youth is not to be recognised in the quiet, mild, judicious old man. Luther in his old age therefore represents a psychological problem which demands explanation. Such an explanation might perhaps be seen at first sight in the fact that from the end of 1517 until his death the reformer was engaged in one of the bitterest, most venomous and most personal struggles which are known in the history of the world, a struggle in which the honour of his wife, his children, his friends and his prince was spared as little as his own person. Such an endless, life-and-death warfare makes the gentlest nature hard, irritable, rough, even gross. But in this case, where we have to deal with a robust, fighting character, a far more trivial explanation is nearer the truth: Luther, from his fortieth year onwards, was a sick man. After he had suffered for six months, in 1521, from severe digestive troubles, he was attacked in 1523 by a nervous affection of the head, which soon became permanent. In 1526 he developed a severe stone in the kidneys, with all possible accompaniments—feverish rheumatism, sciatic conditions, boils, etc. In addition to this he suffered very frequently from obstinate catarrh and digestive trouble, also transitorily from hæmorrhoids (1525), dysentery (1528), a running inflammation of the ears (1537) which for weeks deprived him of sleep and hearing, toothache, and fearful nervous constriction of the chest (1527). As early as 1530 he presented the typical picture of a "perfect case of neurasthenia and premature old age," who, notwithstanding increasingly frequent and increasingly long intervals of rest, still incessantly took upon himself fresh exertions and agitations. For he only obeyed the doctors as far as it was convenient to him, first because he had never much faith in their arts, and secondly because he set no store at all on prolonging his life as much as possible. Staunchly and confidently as he went about his work in the midst of the world, and gratefully as he enjoyed the little pleasures of this life, he yet sincerely *longed* for death, even for martyrdom.[1] No *Weltschmerz*, no melancholy discontent, lay at the root of this calm and for the most part wonderfully cheerful longing for death. With Luther, as with all great Christians from St. Paul to Johann Sebastian Bach, it sprang directly from the conviction which governed his whole feeling and thoughts : " For to me to live is Christ and to die is gain."

After all this it seems almost a miracle that he managed to keep erect for fifteen years more, until the attack of heart failure which ended his life on February 18, 1546. Evidently God had given him, " like his father, a hard, solid body " to take him on his way, otherwise he must have collapsed before this.

To the medical expert the increasing irritability and ill-humour of the ageing reformer are thus fully explained. But, in this case as in others, there are some over-clever historians who encroach on the physician's trade, and physicians who encroach on that of the historian, thinking it necessary to interpret these pathological phenomena psychiatrically. Among the former are, for instance, Grisar and Hausrath, among the latter the Italian doctor Rivari, who in 1914 published a book under the title *La Mente ed il carattere di Martino Luthero*, in which he maintains, among other things, that Luther was a *morbosa natura*, an *egotismo paranoico*. As proof of paranoia he states that Luther suffered from syphilis. How are we to regard these statements ?

Syphilis was as common at that time as smallpox in the eighteenth century, or tuberculosis in the nineteenth. It was, so to speak, the class disease of students, scholars, clerics, monks, soldiers and princes. Among those definitely known to have suffered from it are, for instance, Archbishop Berthold von Mainz (*ob.* 1504), Pope Julius II (*ob.* 1513),

---

[1] *Table Talk*, Nos. 61, 93, and the song " With peace and joy I travel hence."

Cesare Borgia (*ob.* 1507), the Cardinals Cornaro and Sforza, the nuncio Aleander and dozens more Cardinals and members of the Curia, also Ulrich von Hutten, Count Philipp of Hesse, Francis I of France, the Emperor Charles V, etc. It is characteristic of the age that nobody was ashamed of the disease, but confessed to it publicly with as little embarrassment as was later felt concerning smallpox or measles. The Roman physician Fracastoro dedicated his *poem* on the disease, without any doubts as to how it would be received, to the prelate, afterwards Cardinal, Bembo, and good Pope Leo X, equally broad-minded, gave him a special honorarium for this poetic achievement. Ulrich von Hutten distinguished Cardinal Albrecht of Mainz in the same way in the case of a similar work, and he too made no objection to his illustrious name adorning the title-page of such a remarkable book. It is also characteristic of the age that the doctors, because the disease was so common, gave a diagnosis of syphilis at every opportunity. This fact helps us to understand the following letter from Wolfgang Rychardus, a doctor of Ulm, to the medical student Johann Magenbuch at Wittenberg[1]: "As to Luther, the general report here is that he is ill. But G., who has just returned from the Leipzig Fair, relates that our Elijah has recovered. Eberlin has written a great deal to me about Luther's pains, and particularly his sleeplessness. I recommend the following remedy: should *cum hoc dolores mali Franciae somno impedimento esse*, they may be abated with a plaster of stag's marrow with boiled earth-worms, etc. For if he sleeps only once in two days, he will be unable to endure it for long." We ask, had Rychardus ever seen Luther? No! He sat in Ulm, Luther in Wittenberg. Further, was his correspondent, Eberlin von Günzburg, who had written to him about Luther's sleeplessness, connected with Luther in a medical capacity? No! He was one of the many hundreds of students who attended Luther's lectures in Wittenberg. Did Luther's doctor, Matthäus Ratzeberger, who took such pains to obtain information even upon Luther's childhood illnesses, know anything about *morbus gallicus*? No! Did any other among the people closely connected with him, or anyone at all among his contemporaries, know anything of it? No! What does this prove? That Rychardus' incidental remark was nothing, and was meant to be nothing, but a hypothetical suggestion as to the possible cause of Luther's sleeplessness. The hypothesis, however, was one which easily arose in his mind, because doctors had more to do with syphilis at that time than with any other disease. So much for Rivari's medical study.

---

[1] Kolde, *Analekta*, p. 56.

Grisar goes to work more thoroughly. A "disorder" of this kind, according to him, cannot definitely be imputed to Luther; the reformer, however, was the victim of "endogenous neurosis, autochthonous ideas and emotional complexes." By endogenous neurosis we should understand a neurasthenia not induced by exterior influences, but inherent in the psychical constitution of the individual in question, which in plain language is called feeble-mindedness. Autochthonous ideas are ideas which are felt by the patient as alien and not belonging to himself; and which he therefore, unless he is one of the enlightened, ascribes to God or the Devil. Of this nature, according to Grisar, are Luther's so-called satanic temptations. These autochthonous ideas are sharply differentiated from the complexes in that the latter are not regarded by the patient as strange intruders into his consciousness, but, on the contrary, appear to him the expression of his essential nature. Among these Grisar includes Luther's consciousness of greatness and his alleged private revelations. What are we to say to these statements? In the first place, did Luther ever, as Loyola so often did, make any claim to have been vouchsafed private revelations (*revelationes peculiares*), signs or wonders? No! He would never hear anything of such revelations.[1] For he regarded such phenomena as nothing but an imposture of the Devil. How, then, can Grisar maintain the exact opposite? He adduces, first, a passage in Cochlaeus' well-known report of a conversation with Luther in the

---

[1] *Table Talk*, No. 508; *Werke*, xxv., p. 120, and many other passages.

Deutschherrenhof at Worms on April 24, 1521. Cochlaeus says that he put this report on paper on June 10 and 11, that is, two months later. He published it, however, no fewer than nineteen years later, in 1540. This in itself proves that the document must be used with caution. If it is compared with the other reports of the conversation which we have, it soon becomes clear also that Cochlaeus was, as Luther maintained in 1523,[1] a thoroughly unreliable and tendencious reporter. What is his story? "I put the question suddenly to Luther, without any preliminary civilities: 'Have you received a revelation?' He answers hesitatingly: 'I have received a revelation.' Thereupon I: 'But you have just denied it?' For before he had said with greater modesty: 'I do not say that it is revealed to me.' To this Luther: 'I did not deny it.' I: 'Who will believe that it has been revealed to you?'"[2] We see from this that even if Luther really used the word "revealed," everything depends on what he understood by "revealed." This is even clearer in Grisar's other principal piece of evidence, namely Luther's utterances as to the much-discussed *Turmerlebnis*, his experience in the tower of the Black Monastery.[3] There, indeed, Luther states that he attained a true understanding of Romans i. 17, through God's mercy or with the aid of the Holy Ghost. But is he thinking of signs and wonders, of a *revelatio peculiaris* after the manner of Loyola's famous revelation at La Storta?[4] No; for he informs us clearly: "I compared the context, and then at last I understood the meaning." What he says is thus merely a way of expressing the conviction afterwards formulated theoretically in Lutheran dogma, that the efficacy of the divine Word is always conditioned by the activity of the Holy Ghost. This is an entirely different matter from a *revelatio singularis* or *peculiaris*. All the other passages brought forward by Grisar are of just the same nature. Wherever Luther gratefully emphasises that it was God who opened his eyes to the truth of the Gospel,

---

[1] *Werke.*, xi., p. 296.

[2] *Correspondence* (ed. Enders), iii., p. 176.

[3] *Cf.* p. 46.

[4] Boehmer, *Loyola*, p. 212.

Grisar reads into his words a claim to direct inspiration, to especial supernatural communication. That neither Paul, Augustine, Luther, Calvin, nor any of their followers can arrive at faith without the Holy Ghost, through whom God is ever present and active in the world,[1] and that according to Luther all human beings who reach faith pass through exactly the same experience as he, even if they are not definitely conscious of it, is a consideration which entirely escaped this somewhat too hasty psychiatrist.

Closely connected with this, according to Grisar, is another complex of the reformer's, his consciousness of greatness, or, to put it more frankly, his megalomania. As proof of this he produces a collection of passages, amounting to several pages, from the sixty-odd quarto volumes of Luther's works. This collection, unfortunately, is not altogether unexceptionable. In the first place, the quotations are torn from their contexts. In the second place, they are not always reproduced in their entirety. In the third place the passages, at least equally numerous, in which Luther laments his shortcomings, weaknesses and faults and rates himself lower than Melancthon, Staupitz and even such worthy average men as Wenzel Link—these passages are not mentioned, far less given due consideration. Lastly, in order to enliven somewhat the monotony of such an alignment of proofs, Grisar introduces a most unusual proceeding: he causes Luther to make all these statements about himself and his significance in a single speech upon the outer steps—which, incidentally, never existed—of the Castle Church at Wittenberg, after a service, before the assembled people. This proceeding is what a lawyer would call, quite simply, misrepresentation of the facts. Nevertheless, there must be some foundation for Grisar's contentions. What foundation is there?

Even in 1512, while he was still a monk, Luther had no use for the humility which consciously abases itself, but is secretly angling for praise and honour.[2] He regards this affected humility as hypocrisy or puerile foolishness[1]: "As for myself," he declares, "I have only too much reason for humility, that is for the feeling that beside God I am nothing. But as to what God has given me"—he is speaking of the spiritual blessing which he owes to the Psalms—"it is right that I should rejoice and be proud of it, it is right that I should be triumphant over it." Is this arrogance or megalomania? No. It is a typical expression of what Luther means by humility. For in what, to his eyes, does true humility consist? In our giving up all thought of having *deserved* any gift of God, whatever it may be, and regarding everything, even our intellectual talents, even the deeds we have done, as a gift freely bestowed by God without any merit or worthiness on our part. It is therefore not only permissible, it is a *duty* to rejoice at such gifts and deeds, and praise God with gratitude for them, openly and before all the world, even if those who cannot free themselves from the old "foolish" conception of humility regard such an attitude as culpable arrogance. This was the rule the reformer acted upon in practice. He did indeed possess a holy pride which made him thank God for the gifts which He had bestowed on him out of sheer divine mercy and fatherly kindness, and the great deeds which the Lord suffered to be done through him, as through a poor blind horse; and thank Him not only in the privacy of his chamber, but also, sometimes, in the hearing of others. This holy pride is no doubt, in many people, only a hypocritical form of vanity and the desire for popularity and admiration. But with Luther it was no mere form, but an entirely genuine feeling arising from the clear realisation: "What hast thou, that thou hast not received?" The chief care of the self-satisfied, the anxiety to please others, the hunger for higher and ever higher appreciation, the desire for the favourable judgment of public opinion, was, as his whole life shows, a feeling completely strange to him. In all that he said and did he was indeed aware of a spectator and listener, but a spectator and listener above him, not beside or below him. It is undoubtedly one of the great liberating deeds of the great liberator to have revealed this old conception of humility beneath the daubed picture with which the monkish moralists had covered it. How is it, then, that this is still so little appreciated to-day ? First, because the old monkish error is still widely current, the view that an *outward show* of humility is an essential part of pious conduct ; and also because, since the Enlightenment, the spiritual attitude accepted as normal is once more the attitude which Christianity regards as abnormal, and indeed sinful. Not what you have received, but what you are and what you achieve yourself, is the best in you—so the tale runs. Not to be fortunate, but to *deserve* fortune, let this be the aim of all your endeavours. For whatever you obtain unmerited degrades you. To desire no more than you deserve, and to give no man more than he deserves ; that is, to serve no man, in the Christian sense of the word—in short, the pride of the citizen before kingly thrones, before all thrones whatsoever—that is the virtue of virtues. To people who think in this way, to whom moral merit is everything, and everything else in Heaven and earth is nothing, Luther's humility, which denies even the possibility of moral merit and therefore rejoices the more proudly at the undeserved gifts of God, must always be a stumbling-block. For, by a detour through the eudaemonistic ethic, they have come back to the standpoint which he thought to have conquered for ever : the standpoint of the religion of pure merit, in which German peasant morality has found its classical expression—that is, the standpoint of the scribes and pharisees.

---

[1] *Cf.* the Lesser and the Greater Catechism, Article 3.

[2] *Correspondence* (ed. Enders), i., p. 18.

---

[1] *Correspondence*, xi., p. 225.

Thus Luther's megalomania also falls to the ground. What are we to say about the "autochthonous ideas" from which, according to Grisar, he suffered ? It is certainly true that he attributes all possible varieties of inward discord which trouble him, all moods of melancholy, doubt or despair, and also the physical illnesses which he suffers from, to the agency of an alien power, the power of Satan.

But, in the sixteenth century, is there anything striking in this? No! Loyola, to mention only one example, does exactly the same thing; indeed Loyola actually struggles with a demon which appears to him in the form of a snake, and drives it out with a stick like a savage dog. Nothing of this kind ever happened to Luther; for the famous story of the inkpot and the inkstain at the Wartburg is of course a legend. Obviously no sensible person will think of pronouncing Loyola a psychopath on this account, as Lomer does. Every sensible person knows, or ought to know, first, that in every psychical experience a distinction must be made between the actual experience and the interpretation of that experience; secondly, that five-sixths of what is reported as experience is really interpretation; thirdly, that the interpretation of the experience always takes place along the lines of the prevailing views of the time. The sixteenth century believed firmly in spirits and devils. Therefore everyone in that age, not only Luther and Loyola, had recourse to Satan in the interpretation of any kind of remarkable experience. So, according to Grisar, they ought all to be condemned in retrospect to the madhouse.

But are these attacks and temptations not in themselves a symptom of mental disease? Hausrath, indeed, speaks shortly of a recurrent psychosis, without entering on any attempt at proof; for he, the complete bourgeois, merely cannot understand how anyone can feel such agitation concerning his sins, and strive so earnestly for the certainty of reconciliation with God, as Luther did in his youth. Grisar regards this conclusion as far too hasty. He does not believe in a definite mental derangement in Luther's case, only in endogenous neurosis or feeble-mindedness. The characteristic symptoms of this condition are: instability of moods, as for instance variation between colossal self-glorification and complete lack of self-confidence, also abrupt changes in views and convictions, sympathies and antipathies, frequent changes of occupation and interests, intolerance towards alcohol, abnormal sexual inclinations, senseless and groundless fits of fury, moods of fear, and above all what is known as pathological distractibility, *i.e.* inability to concentrate and to carry out work of any magnitude systematically to its completion. Grisar claims to have found not all, but some of these symptoms in Luther—namely, the instability, the alternating changes of mood and the attacks of rage and fear. He is, however, sufficiently cautious to offer the diagnosis only hypothetically. But he does offer it. We ask, then: is it permissible to take a few symptoms out of the complete picture of a pathological state? It is not; naturally *all* must be taken into account, and in particular the most characteristic, which in this case are the pathological distractibility, the abrupt changes in views and convictions, sympathies and antipathies, interests and occupation, the intolerance towards alcohol, the abnormal sexual inclinations, the acute lack of moderation. With the best will in the world, Grisar is unable to discover any of these in Luther. And what apparent evidence he does find to support his hypothesis he grossly exaggerates. Luther, like Gregory VII, Bernard of Clairvaux, Calvin, John Knox, Paul IV and Bismarck, could rage mightily at times. But his anger had always very real grounds and, further, always expended its whole force at the writing-table. Senseless and groundless fits of rage never occurred with him. Also, he had a great capacity for moderation. This appears not only in the moderation with which he behaved, notwithstanding his naturally impatient disposition, at the Diet of Worms, but also in his whole bearing during the progress of the Reformation, from 1522 to 1546, and his really remarkable forbearance towards the many extravagances which Magister Philippus permitted himself after 1532. It may be said of him that he had not only the candour, the industry, the quickness of mind and the enormous power of concentration, but also the moderation of genius. But did he not suffer from moods of fear and oppression? He did indeed; but he makes a distinction (as Grisar himself points out in one place, though afterwards he forgets it again) between these moods and his spiritual temptations. The former were, as he himself informs us, connected with pains in the region of the heart. Such pains, he says, he had occasionally suffered from as a boy. They first returned in January 1527, then very strongly, after a period of spiritual temptation, in July 1527. After this physical suffering came another period of severe spiritual temptation lasting several weeks, his fight against it being certainly not made easier by the nervous exhaustion which the attack of cardiac weakness had left behind. It may be concluded from this that he suffered from nervous weakness of the heart, but he was not on that account feeble-minded. Thus the charge of feeble-mindedness, which indeed Grisar only offers as a hypothesis, also falls to the ground. Only this much is true—Luther was a nervous subject, perhaps intermittently even in his youth, certainly from his forty-fourth year, from 1527 onwards. But one must immediately add: he was *strong* and nervous, like all great passionate characters of world history. If this kind of nervosity, increasing with the years, is united to a temperament inclined to eruptions, old age is bound to bring ever more frequent moments of psychical exhaustion, manifesting itself in extreme ill-humour. These conditions, however, never appeared in Luther with such suddenness and violence as in, for instance, Bismarck. He never "vomited gall a whole night," never had fits of hysteria, never tore the handles off doors in his excitement or smashed whole services of costly glass; similarly, in his moments of greatest depression, he never took such a gloomy view of the people he had to deal with, and the future of his work, as the creator of the German Empire. If the face in the Lembach picture of 1888, in whose harsh creases contempt, bitterness and disillusion "are as if petrified," is compared with the portrait by the younger Cranach of the year 1546 (?), which, although possibly a posthumous work, still gives an idea of the face of Luther as an old man, it is impossible to ignore the difference in humour and attitude towards life between the two.

But there is one chapter of very great importance in the "*pathographia Lutheri*" which we have not yet considered—the current talk about Luther as a huge eater and drinker. Even Goethe makes a well-known jest on the subject: "He fattened his paunch like Doctor Luther." But is the jest well founded? At the time of the Leipzig Disputation Luther was still so thin that all the bones in his body could be counted. When he left the Wartburg, however, he was of a "*ziemliche Feiste*," reasonably plump, and he became still fatter after he married Katharina von Bora. The "paunch" is thus an indisputable historical fact. But this late natural development was no more a result of immoderate living with him than with most of the poor old people who labour under it to-day; it was simply a result of defects in metabolism caused by uric acid diathesis, for it is quite certain that he was no glutton. Spiritedly though he occasionally praised the magnificent hospitality of princes and great ones, in his letters to his wife and friends, he still preferred "healthy, simple home food" to all delicacies. Even game was too "melancholy" for him. But even for simple home food he did not always show much appetite. It would happen that for a considerable period he would eat nothing all day but a herring and a little bread. Once, indeed, he took no food at all for four days, though he was in good health at the time. Melancthon, who was in close touch with him as neighbour and colleague for nearly twenty-eight years, not infrequently marvelled at the small amount of food and drink which sufficed him, notwithstanding his portly form.

But even if the reformer was no gourmet or gourmand, was he not more fond of drink than was becoming, was he not an eternally thirsty "hop-brother," a "wine-barrel," and a "toper," or, as the softer speech of modern times expresses it, an alcoholic and habitual drinker of the gravest kind? Anyone who knows the men of the sixteenth century will be readily tempted to confer all these titles on him. For never have people drunk so much in Germany as at that time. Charles V was not considered a really heavy drinker, for he took only "three drinks" at meals. But at each drink he would empty, in one draught, a crystal glass containing perhaps 1½ pints—about a bottle of wine. The beautiful Philippine Welser was famed for her delicate complexion, but she managed nevertheless at Amras Castle to empty the "Welcome," which contained two whole litres of wine. By this we can measure roughly the capacity of notorious drunkards such as the Elector Johann Friedrich of Saxony, or the Dukes Wilhelm IV and Albrecht V of Bavaria. The unpleasant custom of heating the mouth with pepper, the immoderate use of pepper, cloves and strong spices, and the excessive consumption of meat certainly encouraged this amazing love of drink in no small degree; but it would hardly have swelled to such dimensions but for the fact that after 1520 drinking developed into a definite sport, and the craving for drink was qualified for entry into good society by means of a ludicrously pedantic etiquette. This explains why the vice was so remarkably mildly judged in those days. It seems to us incredible that the Protestant Mathesius and the Catholic Eck could preach energetically from the pulpit against the craving for drink, but maintain at the same time that it was excusable to get half-intoxicated now and again; but their hearers certainly found nothing shocking in this tolerance. Probably they still regarded such preachers as apostles of moderation.

Luther attacked the craving for drink with word and pen more vigorously than any German of his time. He told even princes his opinion of it, in private and in public, blamed the Elector himself *publicly* for this vice, and read the Elector's courtiers an astonishingly drastic lecture. Nevertheless he too judged an occasional "good tipple" fairly mildly. People who are made violent and quarrelsome by alcohol, he says, should certainly avoid drink like poison. But when men are engaged all the week in dangerous work, such as mining, allowances must be made if on Sundays they allow themselves a good drink. In the same way the people of the Court may be permitted to drink beyond the limits of sobriety after hard physical exertion; but for them to look every morning as if their heads had been lying in brine cannot be tolerated in any circumstances. This easy-going attitude will hardly be applauded to-day. But in the sixteenth century even such a distinction as this appeared narrow-minded, pedantic and philistinish.

Men almost invariably form their theories on such questions according to their own practice. The question therefore arises: did not Luther himself sometimes indulge in a good bout, like his father, old Hans Luther; was he not indeed a full-fledged toper? Let us turn with this question first of all to medical opinion. Medical opinion informs us that alcoholic subjects are completely incapable of any strenuous intellectual work. How did Luther stand in this connection?

Let us take a year here and there at random from the various periods of his life, to determine exactly his capacity for work. First, the year 1521—for in this year, according to Father Denifle, he first took to drinking. Nevertheless in this year alone he wrote 28 greater and lesser works, which in the Weimar edition fill altogether 985 pages; also he translated a book of Melancthon's into German and began the translation of the New Testament and the writing out of his Church Postil, as well as writing a great number of letters, of which 72 are in our possession. Yet in this eventful year travel compelled him to inactivity for over five weeks, and he was severely hindered by illness for many days. In 1523 his health began to suffer through the pains in the head mentioned before, and also he was travelling for fourteen days. All the same he composed that year 24 works of various dimensions, gave 150 sermons, a commentary on the book of Deuteronomy which in the Weimar edition occupies 247 pages, completed the German translation of the five books of Moses and began on the books from Joshua to Esther. Besides this we have 112 letters of his for this year, which is of course only a fragment of his whole correspondence. During the five and a half months which he spent on the Coburg in 1530 (April 25 to October 4) his head was giving him so much trouble that, as he says, he was forced to rest and take a holiday. Nevertheless during this period of holiday he completed 12 greater and lesser works, finished the translation of the Book of Jeremiah, put part of Ezekiel and all the minor prophets into German, wrote German versions of some of Aesop's Fables, and also a whole series of letters and memoranda on special points, some of them of very wide scope, 123 of which have been preserved. Finally, for the year 1545, when he was already quite worn out, broken and weary of life, and in which he spent about two months travelling, we have yet a few major and a few minor works, the conclusion of his Commentary on Genesis and over sixty letters and memoranda. In all he published more than 350 printed works, which of course include a series of translations and a large number of pamphlets. In literary productivity only, perhaps, the Jesuit Gretscher (268 works), St. Augustine (232 works), Origen and Luther's great pupil, the Croat Matthias Flacius Illyricus, the still unrecognised saviour of Lutheranism from the catholicising efforts of Melancthon and the Philippists, can be placed beside him. Nor is his productivity, like Gretscher's, mere prolixity. He seems almost inexhaustible both in expression and in ideas. He is certainly the first great writer of Germany, and at the same time one of the most original writers, and one of the richest in ideas, of all times.

This, to the medical man, settles the question of Luther the "alcoholic." A drunkard would have been physically incapable of bearing up under this enormous burden of work, to say nothing of the nervous strain of the mighty struggles which the reformer had to fight out. But this of course does not exclude the hypothesis that the great fighter occasionally allowed himself "*einen guten Rausch.*" It may be said that whole generations of researchers and inquisitors have laboured to collect evidence in proof of this. But all their labours have so far been in vain, for all these proofs have, on further examination, shown themselves to be unsound.[1] When, for instance, he writes "I am not drunk or thoughtless," that is only his emphatic way of speaking, for he writes in the same sense: "Christ was not drunk when He spoke the words instituting the Communion," "God is not drunk," "the Evangelists are not drunk." When Wolfgang Musculus reports in 1538, at the time of the Wittenberg Concord: "On May 21st we accompanied Luther home after dinner. He was wonderfully merry (*mire hilaris*); . . . over the evening drink at his house he was again wonderfully merry and in a most benevolent humour," and when Melancthon somewhat earlier says, "He became very merry and discussed astrology during the meal," this does not prove that the two reformers were intoxicated, but only that they were in good spirits, for *hilaris* means simply gay and cheerful, not "merry" owing to the influence of drink. When in March 1523 at Schweinitz, Luther was sick, *before* the meal, this does not prove that he had drunk too much Grüneberger wine *during* the meal, but merely that his stomach was out of order; and if the vomiting was a daily occurrence at that time, it does not follow that he drank himself sick every day, but merely that he was ill. But did he not once sign a letter with the significant words *Doctor plenus*? By good luck the letter still exists in the original.[2] *Plenus* is of course not there; the word is *Hanns*, the name of Luther's little son, who sent greetings to his god-parents. Equally unconvincing is his famous confession to his "gracious lady of Zülsdorf at the new pig-market," of July 2, 1540: "I gorge like a Bohemian and drink (*saufe*) like a German, for which thanks be to God, Amen." For the whole tone of the letter, which must be read in its entirety, shows that it is a playful exaggeration. This is also abundantly proved by a similar letter of July 16, to the same address, also preserved in the original: "Praise God, we are well and cheerful, eat like Bohemians, but not very much, drink like Germans, but not a great deal, still we are in good spirits." So this evidence also fails. There remains the "notorious verse," "Who loves not woman, wine and song, is but a fool his whole life long." This couplet may indeed be the most quoted of all the expressions ascribed to Luther, but it is not his; it is probably a very old student's rhyme, which in Italy has penetrated even among the peasant class, and which appears to have been imputed to Luther by German students only in the eighteenth century. Why? Because they felt it necessary to connect it with some famous man, and because it seemed to fit so excellently well into the picture of "Father Luther" which the Enlightenment imagined. In any case, it first appears in the *Wandsbecker Boten* of 1775 (No. 75), in a poem which is proved to be the work of Johann Heinrich Voss. For Voss had this poem reprinted in the *Musenalmanach* for 1777 (Hamburg, p. 107), under the title "*Gesundheit von Vater Luther*." When Voss, in December 1776, was applying for the post of Konrektor at Hamburg, he was immediately approached on the subject by the Senior, Herrnschmidt, and as he naturally could not prove Luther's authorship of the phrase, his candidature was rejected "by the whole swarm," *i.e.* by the whole clergy. He took his revenge on the "parsons," not by an historical study of the origin of the rhyme, but by a new "Song to Doctor Luther," in which he used the verses quoted above as the concluding couplet. Nevertheless Herder incorporated the new *Lutherwort* in his *Volkslieder* (i., 12), Müchler used it in his "Drinking-Song" in 1797, and Langbein in 1801 in his "Road to Heaven." Since then the couplet has ranked as a proverb. Grisar, however, thinks that it may be ascribed at least indirectly to Luther. As proof he quotes a conversation of November 1536[1]: "We must allow every country its vice. The Bohemians are gluttons, the Wends are thieves, the Germans can find consolation in being drunkards. For, my dear Cordatus, who can equal a German in drinking, even one who does not love music or women ?" Here, as so often, the reformer regards drunkenness as the national vice of the Germans. This is demonstrated earlier by the commencement of the talk, in which he describes drinking as an evil thing, and even more clearly by the passage in the Commentary on Genesis ix. 20 ff., to which he expressly refers. That he shared the attitude revealed by the rhyme is therefore simply not true. That the rhyme was later on attributed to him is no longer surprising. For how prompt people have always been, and still are, to provide these much-quoted expressions and songs with famous fathers, is universally known, and has been proved often enough, for instance by the poet Hoffman von Fallersleben, himself a great maker of aphorisms, in his book *In Dulci Jubelo.*

---

[1] Chancellor Brück states in a letter to the Elector Johann Friedrich the Magnanimous concerning a conversation with Luther on the evening of November 12, 1536: "he was just a little intoxicated, though he said nothing unseemly," *Neues Archiv für sächsische Geschichte*, xxix., 94. This statement, however, requires closer investigation. It is certain that Luther preached against drunkenness before the Saxon Court just about that time and elsewhere expressed himself very sharply as to this vice, cf. *Table Talk*, No. 3468, 3470, 3476, *Werke*, Weimar ed. xlii., 378 f.

[2] *Doctor plenus*. The signature to the letter (Corr. x., 137 f.) has become so indistinct that it cannot be deciphered with any certainty. Kawerau and Thiele now think it should read "*Doctor plures*," which, however, has absolutely no meaning, *Lutherstudien*, p. 251, 1.

---

[1] *Table Talk*, No. 3476.

These "proofs," therefore, do not hold water, and the others which have been adduced have about the same value as the proofs regarding Luther's alleged illegitimate son Andreas, who was in reality a nephew of the reformer. Luther never says that he has been drunk, and no one ever saw him intoxicated. If anyone had, we should certainly know of it. For if ever a man lived in a glass house, that man was Luther. This, of course, does not mean that he was an anti-alcoholic. Luther the teetotaller is indeed an imaginary picture just as unhistorical as Luther the drunkard. When the reformer says in August 1540: "I drink plenty too, but not everyone should follow my example"; when he opines that God may think all the better of him for having a good drink in His honour now and then; when he writes to a melancholy fellow: "I often drink more freely, in order to vex the Devil"—it is sufficiently proved that he was not at all averse to a good drink. He was undoubtedly very fond of good, pure wine, whether Jüterbogker, Grüneberger, Frankish wine, Rhine wine or Rinvoglio. He was also fond of good Torgau and Naumburg beer. But it was a pleasure which was not often afforded him. In the ordinary way he had to content himself with the dull and not very excellent home-brew of his strict spouse. But it also happened at the Black Monastery that not only the beer ran out, but the money too. The reformer then was forced willy-nilly to dispense with his accustomed drink for forty days and more, and it seems indeed that he felt the loss a good deal. For he valued beer, firstly, as a diuretic, a preventative of calculus; secondly, as a purgative, a medicine against constipation (on this subject he made some highly medical observations at times); thirdly, as a narcotic to induce sleep—for in his old age he suffered very much from insomnia, and had to "seek his pillow and bolster in the beer-can." It will be understood from this that certain especially conscientious students have been at great pains to determine the quantity of alcohol that he consumed daily, and the maximum that he was capable of at exceptional times. But all researches and calculations have so far failed to reach their aim. This problem of Luther research will probably remain a problem for ever, and vex many an inquisitor as sorely as the Devil vexed Doctor Luther.

Thus the drunkard and toper Luther never existed, and a semi-intoxicated Luther was never seen. Of all these accusations nothing remains but the fact that Luther, in later life, drank his beer regularly, liked good wine, and in the evening was accustomed to take a more abundant *Trünklein* as a remedy for sleeplessness. Whether indeed this consumption of alcohol, though far from excessive, was always beneficial to him, we may well doubt. According to modern views, the only alcohol which is good for sufferers from calculus and nervous subjects is the alcohol they do *not* drink. But medicine in the sixteenth century was, from the scientific point of view, still in the age of innocence. Physicians had not the faintest suspicion of the harmful effects of this poison. It therefore never occurred to them to combat the use and abuse of spirituous liquors; on the contrary, they recommended plentiful drinking to sufferers from stone, irrespective of *what* they drank, as a means of driving out the calculus.

Immoderate drinking is, as a rule, accompanied by sexual excesses. This experience is also confirmed by the Germans of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Prostitution was so general in Germany and so mildly judged that, even at Luther's table, one of the companions once ventured to bring up the question whether *fornicatio simplex* was a sin at all. How much the priests, monks and nuns contributed to this corruption is universal knowledge. That Luther was originally a monk is therefore in itself no proof at all of his moral integrity. But obviously it is not permissible to rank him among the great number of black sheep without some definite evidence. Nor, indeed, does Father Denifle do so. He considers himself to possess an adequate quantity of evidence that Luther was a debauchee and also an *Urist*, a man who suffered from chronic sensual desire. One piece of evidence is represented by Luther's letter to Spalatin, of April 16, 1525:

"As for your remarks about my marriage," the letter runs, "do not be surprised at my marrying, seeing that I am such an exceptionally skilful lover. It is more extraordinary, seeing how much I write about marriage and have to do with women *in that way*, that I have not long ago become a woman, to say nothing of marrying. But if you will follow my example, you have the very best of reasons. For I have already had three wives at once, and loved them so intensely that I have lost two of them, who now want to marry other men. The third one I am just managing to hold fast by the left arm. She will probably be torn from me too. But you are such a sluggish lover that you will not even venture to marry one." Anybody reading these words without prejudice will recognise at once that here again Luther the humorist is speaking. We know that Luther was at that time occupied with thoughts of marriage. Several possible parties presented themselves. But none of them altogether suited him. In this sense he tells here of his three wives, as much in jest as Uncle Bräsig over his three brides. But Father Denifle does not understand a joke. He nails Luther down to the expression, *tres uxores simul habui*, and concludes that the licentious creature before his marriage lived in concubinage with three nuns at once. This interpretation is confirmed, he thinks, by the words *misceri feminis* a few lines before. For five years earlier Luther uses *misceri feminis* in another connection as a synonym for *coire*. But the strict critic has in this case not looked closely at Luther's words. Luther writes: "I, who write about marriage so much, *et sic misceor feminis*. . . ." This *sic* shows clearly what Luther means: "I write about marriage so much and *thus* have to do with women." This proof, therefore, does not fulfil all it promises. But there is what appears a better proof in Melancthon's letter to Camerarius, of June 16, 1525, the original of which has only come to light during the last few decades. "Luther has unexpectedly married the woman Bora, without letting one of his friends know of his intention. He only invited Pomeranus (Stadtpfarrer Bugenhagen), Lukas Cranach the painter and Dr. Apel to supper in the evening and went through the usual forms. You may perhaps wonder that at such a serious time, when the good are everywhere suffering severely, he does not suffer with them, but rather, it seems, devotes himself to revelry and compromises his reputation, just at a time when Germany is in especial need of his mind and authority. I think the event is to be explained as follows: The man is extraordinarily easily led astray, and so the nuns, who pursued him in every way, have ensnared him. Perhaps having so much to do with the nuns has softened him, although he is a noble and upright man, and caused the fire to flicker up in him. It is thus, I think, that he has fallen into this most ill-timed change in his mode of life. The talk that he had already slept with the woman Bora before is however an obvious lie. Now that it has happened, we must not take it ill or condemn it. For if I see rightly, his nature compelled him to marry. Even if this form of life—matrimony—is lowly, it is yet holy, and more pleasing to God than celibacy. And since I see Luther somewhat troubled and perplexed over this change in his life, I employ all my thought and energy in consoling him, since he has yet done nothing, it seems to me, which could be made a reproach against him and which he could not justify. Nor do I lack evidence of his piety, so that an adverse judgment (concerning him) is not permissible. Nevertheless I ever cherished the wish that he should experience humiliation, rather than that elevation and exaltation should be his lot. For the latter is dangerous, not only to priests but to all men. Well-being creates occasion for wrong thoughts and feelings, not only, as the Speaker (Demosthenes) says, in the unwise, but also in the wise. Also I hope that matrimony will make him more dignified, and that he will now give up the buffoonery which we have so often reproved. For a different life requires a different way of living, as the proverb says. I write to you thus at length on this matter so that you may not be too much discomposed by the unexpected event. I know you have Luther's reputation at heart, and it would pain you if it suffered any derogation. I exhort you to bear the affair with equanimity; for Holy Scripture says that marriage is an honourable state. Through many errors of the saints of old, God has shown us that we must use His Word as the test, and not form our opinions by the outward seeming and person of a man, but only according to his words. It is utterly godless, we may say, on the other hand to condemn the teaching because of the errors of the teacher."

This letter reflects a curiously divided mood. Marriage is something lowly, and yet holy. Luther has lowered himself by his marriage, has committed an *error*; on the other hand, he has done nothing which deserves blame—one cannot condemn him. What is to be deduced from this? That the writer is in a state of passionate excitement. Luther's marriage has come as a complete surprise to him. He has never wished it, least of all now, at this distressful time of the great German Revolution. In addition he is deeply offended that Luther should have taken this important step without saying a word to him of his intention. In this frame of mind he expresses himself malevolently about Luther, contemptuously about Katharina von Bora, and utters suppositions as to the pre-history of the marriage, which are no less insulting to Luther than to Katharina. With this the historical value of the letter is already judged. It is of interest as documentary evidence of Melancthon's agitated state of mind during that eventful month of June 1525; it is of further significance as a fresh proof of the tension then existing between Luther and Melancthon in consequence of the quarrel with Erasmus. But the suppositions as to the history of Luther's marriage, which Melancthon himself describes as suppositions, have no more weight than any other suppositions of excited and malicious judges. If Melancthon himself had attached any real importance to them, it would be hard to understand how his mood swung round so quickly; for he was not only present at Luther's public wedding ceremony on June 27, but of his own accord invited Wenzel Link, in a note of June 20 or 21, not without introducing a joking reference to Hieronymus Baumgärtner, the old admirer of Katharina. As to what he was capable of in moments of excitement, we have very remarkable examples in his letter to the Papal legate Campegi at the time of the Augsburg Diet and his address to the Saxon minister Von Carlowitz at the time of the Augsberg Interim. The present letter deserves a place by the side of these documents. For it, too, is certainly no proof of magnanimity.

We shall therefore do well to take, not Magister Philippus, but Luther himself, as witness for the crown concerning the pre-history of his marriage. He expressed himself often enough, with the frankness natural to him, as to this episode in his life. He wanted to marry, first, to fulfil his old father's wish; secondly, to do honour to the holy state of matrimony in deed as well as in word; thirdly, to infuriate the Papists. In all this he completely succeeded through his marriage. That he was not "wood and stone" towards the fair sex, he openly admitted in a letter to Spalatin on November 30, 1524. But this feeling was not so strong that he would have been inclined to matrimony on that account. He declared this to be out of the question in that same letter, and since he was then in his forty-second year there is no apparent reason for doubting his statement. A more likely contributing cause of his decision was the "longing for an orderly domestic life," which is more natural at that time of life than youthful amorousness. For his bachelor existence in the Black Monastery was not exactly enviable. For the last year previous to his marriage, for instance, he had nobody to make his bed. In consequence he slept every night on an unmade bed, so that finally the bedclothes and straw began to decay. "I knew nothing about it—for I was tired, working away the whole day, and simply fell into bed"—so he tells his table-companions in 1540. Nor did he leave us without an answer to the question why he finally decided upon Katharina von Bora. Katharina had been betrothed for nearly two years to a young Nuremberg patrician, Hieronymus Baumgärtner, to whom she was deeply attached. But as she was extremely poor, the practical young man broke off his connection with her. Luther, who had eagerly encouraged this connection, now sought to persuade the abandoned girl, with the energy characteristic of him, into a marriage with the Orlamünd parson Glatz. But Katharina opposed this *parti* most strenuously. She even declared roundly one day to Professor Amsdorf that she would take *him or Luther*, but never Glatz. It was this extremely frank declaration which, as far as we know, first gave Luther the idea of wooing the Saxon *Edelfräulein*, whom he had not previously found exceptionally attractive or congenial—and, as he put it crudely enough, of "taking pity on the deserted woman." Thus this marriage, which has raised more dust than any marriage we know of, came about in an absolutely unromantic way, and it is therefore utterly ludicrous for the forty-two-year-old bridegroom to be depicted, as he sometimes is still, as no less impassioned than a student of twenty, and the twenty-seven-year-old bride, who had only just got over a deep attachment for another man, as no less enthusiastic than a girl of seventeen. Nor did romance afterwards enter into the married life of the couple. The prematurely ageing and always ailing husband and the very active, energetic, prudent and not uneducated wife soon became honestly devoted to each other and lived very loyally and harmoniously together, but the sugary emotionalism and demonstrativeness which to later times is the indispensable mark of a happy marriage may be sought in vain in the relations of the pair. If anywhere in the reformer's history, it is in his married life that he reveals the "healthy Philistinism" of the German national character, which strikes foreigners so strangely, and which yet has ever been a source of strength to the nation. That a monk such as Father Denifle should take offence at Luther's naïve utterances as to his married happiness, and that he should regard the concubinage of celibate priests as a "less weighty offence" than that "settled relationship" which the Protestants call Luther's "marriage," is not to be wondered at. A monk is not properly competent in such questions. He is apt to lack that open-minded attitude towards what is natural, which is indispensable for an objective judgment. Whoever reads with an open mind the very open confessions of Luther the married man will fail entirely to discover the *Urist* branded by Denifle. He will find in the annals of this marriage, so unspeakably and basely calumnied, absolutely nothing remarkable; he will therefore be unable to see in the incredible "jokes" of the priest Cochlaeus and the equally estimable *littérateur* Lemnius mere "crude realism," but will regard them simply as the products of a boundlessly depraved imagination.[1]

---

[1] Earlier, eroticism played no part in Luther's life. He himself says: "*monachus non ego sensi multam libidinem. Pollutiones habui ex necessitate corporali. Mulierculas ne aspexi quidem, cum confiterentur. Nolebam enim nosse eorum facies, quos audiebam. Erfurdiae nullam audivi, Wittenbergae tres tantum*" (*Table Talk*, No. 121). "I was chaste. Far, far heavier temptations troubled me than the temptations of the flesh." Have we any reason to doubt these statements? No. A man who has to go through such violent inward struggles and who thinks, studies, and works as much as Luther is indeed, for very simple psychological reasons, hardly subject to such temptations. The sensualists and prurient-minded persons who judge everyone by their own dirty souls will never understand this. But it is so.

But with all this the register of Doctor Martin's sins is still not exhausted. The *Urist*, pornographer, obscene brawler, drunkard, glutton and crass ignoramus discloses himself finally as a common falsifier and liar. In this case too it is not the first time the reformer has been depicted in this questionable form to an astonished world. During his lifetime he was frequently branded as a falsifier of the Bible. He gave a brief and telling answer to the charge as early as 1530 in his letter *Vom Dolmetschen*. Father Denifle does not go into this accusation in detail; it is so much an accepted thing to Catholic polemics that nothing new remains to be said, and agreement on the subject is not to be thought of. But Denifle believes himself to have found the "rogue" out in quite a considerable number of other falsifications. He succeeds, indeed, in proving that Luther sometimes quoted ecclesiastical writers wrongly, and sometimes drew far-reaching conclusions from false quotations. He might have given many more examples than he does; so large is the number of false quotations in Luther's writings. What does this show? Only that Luther worked hastily, and often did not take the trouble to look up the authors he quoted. Sometimes, in fact, he was forced to rely on his memory entirely, as for instance in the pamphlet "On the Monastic Oath," of 1521–2, which is especially severely pulled to pieces by Denifle; for this work was written on the Wartburg, where he had no library at his disposal. That even *his* memory was not always absolutely certain, that he sometimes made bad mistakes, that he now and again completely misunderstood the authors he consulted—these are failings which he shares with very famous men of learning—for example, Father Denifle. Just as no one now thinks of designating Father Denifle's mistakes as falsifications, so no one is justified in assuming that Luther's mistakes were not made in good faith, particularly as he had to work much more hurriedly than a modern scholar and the aids available to him were far more imperfect.

But even if the reformer was not a falsifier, did he not take up a very equivocal attitude towards the commandment of truthfulness, and himself transgress this commandment in the most reprehensible way? It is true, indeed, that he did not scruple to declare *Nutzlügen*, expedient or beneficial lies, as theoretically permissible, and in one famous case even advocated such a white lie. These are facts which are beyond doubt, but let us once more listen to the accused before indulging in the exquisite pleasure of outraged morality.

Luther defines as "*Nutzlügen*" those lies which are told for the advantage and happiness of another, such as the lie of the Egyptian midwives in favour of the Hebrew male children whom they were ordered by Pharaoh to throw into the Nile (Exodus i. 18, 19). Certain early Christian theologians such as Hilarius, Chrysostom, Cassian, also declared such beneficial lies to be morally blameless. Augustine, however, stamped them as sinful, and he was followed by St. Thomas and the whole Thomist school; still they regarded this kind of lie as a venial sin, and on the other hand held the clever *concealment* of the truth (*dissimulatio*) to be permissible. Other theologians were of opinion that in certain circumstances it might be a greater sin to speak the truth than to be guilty of a *Nutzlüge*. For it is only the harmful lie which God unconditionally forbids (*mendacium adversus proximum prohibet*), the beneficial lie He only restricts (*pro proximo cohibet*). Luther adopted the latter view, but in many respects, while choosing almost the same examples as illustrations, went along lines of his own. He found that the Holy Fathers in the Bible had occasionally made use of the *Nutzlüge* without their conduct receiving blame on that account from the authors of the Holy Scriptures; indeed it seemed to him that St. Paul, Christ and God did not always say exactly what they meant. This to him was sufficient to prove the permissibility not only of the ordinary lie of necessity, but also of the expedient lie to the benefit and advantage of one's neighbour. This method of proof will not be countenanced by any Protestant to-day. But that does not prove that Luther was wrong in his view of the question itself. As far as the question itself is concerned, most ethical writers think exactly as he does, with the exception of a few rigorists. And even these rigorists often find their principles very hard pressed among the minor and major emergencies of life, as is shown by the example of their leader and master Emmanuel Kant, who in theory condemned every lie solemnly as infamous, but in practice was infamous enough to permit himself such an infamy, namely, an amphiboly, a mental reservation, *i.e.* a very ordinary lie of necessity, and that in a " most solemn " declaration of " deepest devotion " towards King Friedrich II of Prussia.[1] But even if the reformer should have judged better on this point than the great sage of Königsberg, it is still a serious question whether, in the one celebrated case where he quite certainly demanded an advantageous and expedient lie, he was morally justified in such a demand. For with what was this famous case concerned ? Not with the prevention, but with the hushing-up of a " manifest crime "—the preservation of secrecy regarding the " Turkish marriage " which the Landgrave Philipp of Hesse had contracted at Rothenburg with Margarete von der Saale on March 4, 1540. It must be asked, however, whether Luther saw this Turkish marriage in the light of a manifest crime, and whether he did not regard the concealment of it as necessary actually on moral grounds.

As to the first query, it has long been a matter of certainty that the reformer held bigamy to be permissible many years before the question of the Hessian marriage arose. As early as 1520 he publicly declared in his *De Captivitate Babylonica Ecclesiae* that he could more easily give his agreement to a double marriage than to the annulment of a marriage lawfully existing in the sight of God ; and similarly he professes the belief, from 1520 onwards, not only in confidential statements of approval, but in many announcements intended for the widest publicity, that polygamy is not in itself forbidden to Christians by the New Testament. In cases of severe necessity, for instance, if the wife develops leprosy or becomes otherwise unfit to live with her husband, the latter therefore cannot be forbidden to take an additional wife. But this permission is always to be restricted to such cases of severe necessity. The idea of legalising general polygamy was far from the reformer's mind. Monogamy was always to him the regular form of matrimony, even if he did not until later declare emphatically that it alone entirely expressed the divine order of creation. Only upon one point did he change his opinion in the course of years, namely the question whether, in the cases of necessity referred to, the husband should enter into a second marriage publicly, or only privately. In September 1531 he considered it permissible for Henry VIII to take Anne Boleyn to wife publicly as his second consort and queen. Later he only approved of dispensations being given for such additional marriages if the latter were kept strictly secret. As to how he arrived at these views, which strike us as so strange, he never left his readers and hearers in any doubt. Abraham was undoubtedly a good Christian and a man full of the Holy Ghost, yet he lived in a state of polygamy. Therefore polygamy cannot be a thing necessarily displeasing to God. Nor did the Gospel, being a divine revelation pertaining only to the *inner* life, cancel the permission given by the law of Moses on this point. Therefore it still cannot be forbidden to Christian laymen to make use of this permission, but, be it noted, only to Christian *laymen*. The clergy are, by 1 Timothy iii. 2, expressly obliged to content themselves with one wife. These allowances of the reformer's were not long in exciting attention. His old antagonist Cochlaeus attacked him on the point in 1528, and the authors of the Catholic Confutation wanted to raise a public protest at the Diet of Augsburg in 1530. But did Luther stand alone? By no means! Melancthon, Butzer, Karlstadt, Capito thought just as he did, the Anabaptists introduced polygamy by law at Münster on July 23, 1534, and even in the Catholic camp there was no lack of people who held similar views. Cardinal Cajetan, for instance, was of opinion that the Pope had power to grant dispensations for bigamy, and in the question of Henry VIII's marriage definitely recommended the Pope to avail himself of this authority, to avoid a worse evil. And the Pope actually submitted the question to his Cardinals in the Consistory, whether such a dispensation were valid or not; to which question they replied in the negative. It will be seen from all this that the discussion as to the allowability of bigamy was not first aroused by the double marriage of the Landgrave. It had long been current when Philipp concluded his Turkish marriage, indeed, it was this discussion which first gave him the idea of seeking such an unusual remedy for his moral and domestic wretchedness.

---

[1] *The Dispute of the Faculties*, Preface (Rosenkranz ed.), p. 257.

Philipp had married in 1523 at the age of nineteen. But the wife who was sought out for him was unable to retain his fidelity; she was indeed so repellent to him that even in 1526 he appears to have formed the project of a second marriage. On this occasion he was induced by Luther's sincere admonition and counsel not to carry out the idea. But his physical distaste for his unattractive wife became greater rather than less with the years, and his hot blood led him repeatedly into "fornication and adultery." He did not escape the consequences. At the beginning of 1536 he became seriously ill with venereal disease. In this condition he "thought all manner of things." It became clear to him that he must be ruined in body and soul if he continued in his former habits. But it had long been clear to him, too, that he could not "contain himself," still less keep only to his wife. It therefore seemed to him indicated that he should at last avail himself of the "permission given in the law of Moses, which neither Christ nor the apostles had revoked," and by taking to himself another wife put himself "in a better state before God and his conscience." He did not, however, definitely make up his mind to this until, in September 1539, in the "*Frauenzimmer*" of his sister, the Duchess Elisabeth of Saxony, he became acquainted with the seventeen-year-old Margarete von der Saale, of Schönfeld in the Meissen district. He chose this young lady to be his second wife. According to the custom of the time, though he let the lady herself know of his intentions, the serious preliminary negotiations took place only between himself and Margarete's mother, Anna von der Saale, a lady-in-waiting at the Court. She, after some hesitation, actually agreed to his wishes. But she made some very inconvenient stipulations. It seemed to her best that the new marriage should be publicly recognised at once. Should this be impossible, the prince must at least obtain the approval of certain of the nobility, a few "scholars," the Elector and Duke Moritz of Saxony, and must make arrangements for the wedding to take place in the presence of envoys from the Elector and the Duke, and of at least two theologians of repute, whether Luther, Melancthon or Butzer. But first and foremost the Landgrave must procure a certificate from some learned men to the effect that his project was not against the law of God. Luther's agreement she regarded as desirable, but not absolutely necessary. Philipp may perhaps have hoped to be able to beat down some part of her demands. But if he did not wish to give up his plan in advance, he must at least try to please the lady-in-waiting. His whole conduct during the succeeding months was therefore governed by the endeavour to fulfil the conditions of this shrewd and ambitious woman. It is possible that he did not clearly admit this even to himself. In any case he kept a profound silence on the matter even towards his most trusted advisers, and first of all tried by circuitous methods, without giving any indication of his real aim, to win over all the persons whom the lady had named. He turned first to Butzer, then, while Butzer went to Saxony, to the Landgräfin his wife; then, when the Landgräfin had agreed (December 17, 1539), and the answer of the Saxon princes had reached him (after the middle of December), to his own theologians and jurists.

What representations did he make, through Butzer, in Wittenberg, to gain over Luther and Melancthon, and how did the two reformers answer him? First, he described very impressively the "inward distress" caused him by his unhappy marriage with the Landgräfin and the immoral mode of life into which he had fallen in consequence. He then declared that in order to escape from the evil promptings and snares of the Devil, he would gladly avail himself of the means countenanced by God, and take an additional wife. To this end he demanded of the reformers, in entire accord with the lady-in-waiting's wishes, a public statement in favour of bigamy. If this were not feasible, if the proposed step must at first remain secret, he asked to be provided at least with a "certificate for himself" giving assurance that his intention was not contrary to God's law. What did the Wittenbergers necessarily conclude from this, and from the moving picture of his troubled conscience with which the Landgrave began his Instruction? That he *needed* a certificate of this kind for his own sake, to make certain whether his plan was or was not against God's will. Was this really the case? No! He himself had long ago ceased to cherish any such scruples, and had long been so convinced that he could marry the lady of his choice that at the beginning of November, before he had even spoken to Butzer, he sent his physician to Würtemberg to purchase wine for the impending wedding! He did not, in fact, need any "certificate" for himself: he needed it only to obtain the final consent of his future mother-in-law. Of this, however, he very sagaciously did not utter a word, nor yet of the fact that he had long ago chosen his new wife and had been negotiating over the marriage settlements for months. Thus he quite consciously deceived Luther, and deceived him because he knew very well that Doctor Martinus "was a hard man to lead, let alone drive, but that he would come running of his own accord if danger to God's truth or troubles of conscience were suggested to him." Nor did he deceive him only in this connection. He also kept silent as to the fact that he had already had a concubine, and was therefore, according to Luther's view, which was by no means unknown to him, already bound, and no longer in a position to choose freely.

The answer of the two reformers, dated December 10, 1539, is entirely in accordance with the impression which they were intended to gain, and necessarily did gain, from

Philipp's application. They grant him no public certificate, only a "certificate and memorandum for himself" or *confessional counsel.* In this memorandum they demonstrate circumstantially that the contraction of a second marriage of this kind may indeed be acceptable to God, but only in cases of dire necessity, and only in the way of confession, with a dispensation from the officiating clergyman. Whether the Landgrave feels himself to be in such a position of need, they leave it for him to decide. "It is not their intention to encourage him and drive him on." On the contrary, they exhort him earnestly to resign himself to his married life and guard himself against scandal. Finally, however, so that he may put himself in a better position towards God and his conscience, they grant him, with various strongly worded stipulations, a dispensation to enter into a secret second marriage. But this marriage must remain secret for ever. Only to the woman concerned and a few trusted persons may the prince disclose, under the seal of confessional secrecy, that it is a question of marriage and not of mere concubinage.

It will be understood that Frau von der Saale had many objections to make concerning this memorandum, and the Landgrave had no slight trouble in calming her. Not until he had twice more sent ambassadors to Saxony did she profess herself quite satisfied. The confessional counsel therefore failed to perform its purpose. Not by this document, but by Philipp's assurance that bigamy would be permitted "to other people too," was the valiant lady-in-waiting at last moved to bestow her consent. Only now, in February 1540, was Margarete von der Saale informed of what had been decided between her mother and the Landgrave. The latter, however, still showed himself very conformable to the "dear lady's" wishes. As he had promised, he lured the unsuspecting Melancthon on some pretext or other to Rothenburg on the Fulda, that he might be present at the marriage; then, on March 4, he and Margarete received the benediction of the Church, though this was definitely forbidden in his dispensation, and finally, to tranquillise his new mother-in-law, he handed over to her, among other important documents, a copy of the confessional counsel. The ambitious lady had really, therefore, every reason to be satisfied with him. Luther did not receive detailed information of all this until the end of May 1540. Only then did he also learn that the Landgrave had previously had a concubine. At this latter fact in particular he was so infuriated that he declared: "Had I known that, indeed no angel should have persuaded me to give such advice." He now realised clearly that Philipp had inveigled him into granting the dispensation by misrepresenting the facts, and he was even prepared to admit his "error" publicly—*i.e.* to declare the confessional counsel null and void.

But how could he, in spite of this, still maintain that his counsel had been right in itself, and adhere to the conviction that *any* evangelical clergyman had power, in special cases, to grant in confession a dispensation for a secret bigamous marriage? How did he, in the first place, even hit upon this idea, so intolerable to Protestant feelings—the idea that the clergy may secretly authorise something that is rightly forbidden by secular and ecclesiastical laws, that the clergy have to decide in the way of confession what is and is not permitted to laymen, and in this way, as advisers in matters of conscience, guide the consciences of their flock? This is indeed more than strange; at first sight it is, in the very father of Protestantism, simply incomprehensible. But he has, up to a certain point, given a solution to the riddle. He confessed quite openly to the Elector of Saxony, in June 1540, that this affair, in his opinion, did not fall within the scope of a public secular court, but was purely a confessional matter; therefore in the advice he gave he followed the same line of conduct which he had formerly observed in similar confessional matters *under the Papacy*; his preceptor at the monastery, who had had many such cases to deal with, also behaved in the same way. Thus he formally appeals to the mediaeval confessionary practice and wishes his attitude to be judged by the rules and principles of that practice, well known to him from his monastic days. But, it may be asked, had these rules and principles really such weight with him as he claims? In all his utterances on the question of marriage he presupposes the distinction between natural law and divine law on the one hand, and positive law on the other. This is thoroughly mediaeval. He also assumes that there are things permitted by God which are contrary to natural law, but which, since they have the testimony of Holy Scripture, must still be regarded as permissible. This again is thoroughly mediaeval. He concludes from this that the confessor has authority secretly to bestow dispensations for actions which are forbidden by secular and ecclesiastical laws. Such actions must, however, be permitted by the law of Nature or be "sanctioned" by God. This is nothing but the mediaeval doctrine of the *dispensatio in foro interno tantum*. On the basis of this view he himself grants the Landgrave such a *dispensatio in foro interno tantum*, thus taking it upon himself to direct the prince's conscience quite after the manner of a Catholic confessor. In other words, his confessional counsel is genuinely a product of mediaeval confessionary theory, or, which amounts to the same thing, the sometime father confessor in him overcame the reformer in this matter, which was to have such important consequences. The only remarkable point in his conduct, and the only one to which exception could be taken from the modern Catholic point of view, is his belief that this *dispensatio in foro interno tantum* could be granted even for bigamy. But we have already seen that at that time a Cardinal of the Roman Church, Cajetan, regarded such a dispensation as allowable, and even a Pope treated this view as arguable. The confessional counsel of December 10, 1539, is therefore nothing more than a classic example of the persistence of the mediaeval-Catholic confessionary practice on the soil of Lutheranism. Nor is it by any means the first example of this kind. Luther himself relates that he gave similar dispensations to other people on several occasions. For instance, he advised certain clergymen in the Duchy of Saxony to enter into a regular marriage with their cooks, which according to the law of the land they might not do. Thus, strangely enough, he found nothing abhorrent in performing the functions of a confessor, giving advice and *instruction* in matters of conscience, and in this matter simply adhered to the rules taught him in the monastery, as if it were all as much a matter of course to an evangelical clergyman as to a Catholic priest.

It is not surprising, therefore, that all his life he upheld with equal lack of embarrassment the mediaeval-Catholic doctrine of confessional secrecy, and, on occasion, applied its logical consequences relentlessly. Proof of this is found, again, in the affair of the Hessian marriage.

The secret of Rothenburg did not long remain a secret. The Landgrave's sister disclosed it no later than March 1540, in her quite understandable anger at her brother's prevarication. The Dresden Court, however, seized on the affair greedily as a chance for a good stroke of business, and even had Philipp's new mother-in-law arrested on June 2, in course of which some of the incriminating documents which the lady had received at Rothenburg came to light. In this painful situation Philipp urged his confederates to authorise the public avowal of his new marriage, and, to make them amenable, even threatened them openly with the publication of the Wittenberg memorandum. Luther did not let himself be intimidated by this for a moment. He opposed Philipp's wishes with all his might. At the Eisenach conference in July 1540 he demanded unconditionally of the Hessian intermediaries that the prince should, as far as the public was concerned, *flatly deny* the existence of his new marriage—should, indeed, proffer a flat lie, a *Nutzlüge*, to bring the chatterers to silence. If, on the other hand, Philipp insisted on making the memorandum public, Luther would write against him and confess openly before the whole world that he had erred—that is, that the confessional dispensation was invalid. Philipp has often been praised for replying proudly to this demand, which was also made by Butzer and the Court of Electoral Saxony: "I will not lie, for lying sounds ill, nor did any Apostle ever teach it to any Christian, nay, Christ utterly forbade it, and said that we should keep to Yes and No." But he does not in reality deserve this praise, for how often and how boldly had he already lied in this affair, even to his own sister! Besides, was he really prepared to keep to Yes and No? "If anybody should speak to me on the subject," he says in the same breath, "I shall give an obscure answer"—in other words, mislead his interrogators. But even if one has no right to set the Landgrave up as a model of virtues compared with Doctor Martinus, the fact still remains that Luther advocated a lie. The question now is, how he arrived at this "criminal thought." He himself answers once more, briefly and conclusively: because it was a question of a *confessional counsel*. Just as the confessor is not allowed to make known anything that he learns in the confessional, so the confessant, says Luther, is in duty bound to keep silence as to the confessor's instructions. And just as the confessor is compelled, should need arise, to proffer a false oath in order to guard the seal of the confessional, so it is the duty of the confessant if necessary to assure it by a flat denial or a direct lie. Is this view so extraordinary as it is usually represented to be? No; for Catholic theologists still teach to-day: "The penitent is also bound to silence concerning all that he cannot reveal without causing unjust harm to the father confessor." Further, it was at this time maintained by the theologists in whose theories Luther had been brought up, the Moderns or Occamists, that he who reveals the secrets of the confessional commits a mortal sin. The logical consequence, in confessionary practice, was obvious; a lie of expedience is more to be recommended to the confessant than a breach of the confessionary seal. What follows from this? That Luther's demand of a *Nutzlüge* is nothing more than a consequence of the Occamist doctrine on the inviolability of confessional secrecy, a doctrine which he never abandoned. For the lie of expedience is only a venial sin, and therefore definitely to be recommended in such a case for the avoidance of a worse evil. But this does not entirely explain his conduct in this particular affair. It may be asked, had the Landgrave really confessed himself to the reformer, and was Luther really entitled to apply to him the old Catholic articles on confessional secrecy? It is quite true that in this case a "sacramental confession" had not taken place. But this was not necessary, and is still according to Catholic doctrine not necessary, to justify the duty of "sacramental silence." "If any person reveals the state of his conscience to the confessor, even if it be only with the intention of obtaining advice, the duty of sacramental silence comes into force."[1]

It will now be understood why the reformer never felt any qualms of conscience as to his attitude in the affair of the Hessian marriage. He was heartily loth to grant the Landgrave a dispensation for bigamy, but he was convinced that he *could* do so, since bigamy was in cases of necessity permitted by God; and he believed, misled by the Landgrave's false statements, that the latter's case was such a case of necessity. Later, for the preservation of confessionary secrecy, he recommended a lie of expedience, but he believed that he had a moral right to do this also. For he regarded a breach of the confessionary seal as a serious crime, and held that to prevent such a crime a *Nutzlüge* was no less permissible than if the crime which threatened had been murder or manslaughter. He acted throughout the affair in exact conformity with the powers and duties which in general he considered to be those of a confessor. The political aspect of the matter he unfortunately, as the documents prove, never took into consideration, and as for the consequences to his own reputation which his conduct might have, they, as usual, never entered his mind for a moment. Unfortunately, he judged the whole affair in the narrow perspective of the confessional, and in his honest endeavour to help an apparently desperate man to a better state before God and his conscience quite forgot, as he so often did, that he had long ago discarded the priest's cassock. If due regard is paid to all this, the attitude he adopted in the Hessian marriage mistake may indeed be lamented, but cannot be condemned. Far less can it be employed as a classic proof of the moral inferiority of his new religious principles. For these *new* principles have absolutely nothing to do with his conduct, which is, on the contrary, an after-effect of the old mediaeval-Catholic principles, and the classic proof of how strongly the habits of thought of the old faith, and the Catholic practice in the care of souls, still occasionally influenced his actions, even when he had long broken with Catholicism in principle.

---

[1] Gury, *Moraltheologie*, ii, 648, 3.

The reformer himself frequently stated with emphasis: "Let anyone who will attack my person. I do not give myself out as a saint." This challenge has been accepted with such eagerness, by his contemporaries and following generations, that one would think humanity had no more urgent concern than to burn this heretic, at least in effigy, since unfortunately Pope and Emperor could not manage to bring him to the torture chair and the stake during his lifetime. But what is the result of this heresy-suit, which has now dragged itself out for nearly 400 years? The proceedings must be dropped. For the majority of the charges brought against the accused have proved to be vulgar lies. Others cannot be sustained because he can be proved to have acted in good faith. This applies above all to the Hessian dispensation and his "insults" to the Papacy. But is the "Luther case," then, closed? No; for it is as yet only proved that the "Devil's advocate," though indeed no saint, had no right to that title, and that the accused stood all his life under the cramping influences which upbringing and environment exercise on the thought and action of even the strongest, most mature and most independent of men. But we are far from having gained a clear picture of the true, the complete Luther. For we can never get to know the complete Luther if we allow our line of vision to be prescribed by his accusers. The complete Luther shows himself only to him who approaches Luther's personality with an open mind and, misled by neither friend nor foe, allows it to work upon him in all its strength and abundance. The negative result with which the four-hundred-year-long proceedings close thus requires a positive complement. But this task has been performed so often that it does not need to be performed again in its entirety. Only as regards the method to be followed, and certain features of Luther's character which most biographers have not interpreted rightly, a brief disquisition is necessary.

The poet says: "Wouldst thou know thyself aright, see then the actions of others. Wouldst thou understand others, look into thine own heart." But is this verse quite true? No; the second part at least is incorrect. To understand others, we must transplant ourselves into their souls. And this is not always so easy as is usually assumed. Anyone, for instance, who regards the cultivation of his own individuality, or the perfecting of himself, or the fulfilment of moral duty out of self-respect (Kant), as man's highest moral task, will never be able to judge Luther fairly. For such a person consciously takes up that very attitude of mind which the reformer, after the experiences of his monastic years, condemned as abnormal and rejected unconditionally. The intentional concentration of attention upon one's own ego, he believes, leads only apparently to self-perfection, in reality to a kind of self-poisoning. This method leads the average man infallibly to self-righteousness, for he is far too much inclined to regard outward conformity with the laws of society as moral perfection, and to look down with pharisaical superciliousness upon the publicans and sinners who lack this external correctness or virtuousness. More serious and conscientious natures, on the other hand, who have not the talent for throwing dust in their own eyes, necessarily find themselves plunged into the severest distress of conscience, because they can never attain the absolute purity of will which they demand of themselves. Also, in either case, the individual becomes more or less blind to all values existing outside his own self; blind to God—for if such self-righteous or self-tormenting persons trouble themselves seriously about God at all, the God they revere is not the true God, but a painted fictitious God, a mere idol, whom they think to impose upon with their miserable works;

blind also to the duties which result for every man from the position allotted him, by birth or endowment, in the holy order of Christian love—for both the self-righteous and the self-tormenter prefer all manner of recondite works, sought out by themselves, to the inconspicuous works which by the canons of Christian love constitute man's first moral duty. Luther therefore never wearies of attacking these two forms of self-poisoning.[1] What, then, is the inward attitude which he regards as normal, and unceasingly strives to make his own? Utter abandonment of all egotistic desire to "be something," liberation from the limits of self by union with a higher self, and sacrifice of all individual interests in favour of all other individuals of the same nature—that is, unreserved devotion to God and one's fellow-men. This re-orientation of the will, so strongly concentrated upon self, is indeed not to be effected by a mere act of will on the part of the individual. But when achieved, it at once sets free in the soul a new and beatific sense of life, which flows out in two directions—towards God, in the form of boundless confidence in God's grace, and towards man in the form of abounding love; and this of itself leads to a continual advance in goodness or a progressive perfecting of the ego. The practical conduct of the reformer entirely expresses this point of view; and it is for that reason that a knowledge of his fundamental attitude towards the old methods of monkish doctrine is so important for the understanding of his personality. He has no idea of training and exercising his own self in the manner of those ascetic athletes of the will so that at last, as in Loyola's case, the outer self merely executes the commands of the inner self. In all the situations arising in life he knows only one regulator of his feelings, thoughts and actions—conscience. Conscience likewise governs his inward life. For the rest, he abandons himself quite freely to the impulse of the moment, or more strictly to the mighty force of the overflowing vitality which breaks forth unendingly with the freshness of youth from the inexhaustible depths of his inmost soul. Therefore he never chooses his own task. He is rather chosen by his task, seized by it, indeed, and carried away, so carried away that he seems entirely to lose himself in the problem or the work which occupies him at any given time, and meanwhile utterly fails to see any other problems; in consequence, he is apt to become entangled in contradictions, and to reach somewhat extravagant conclusions. But for the same reason, in all that he says, does or writes, even if he follows the advice and opinions of others, or makes obvious errors and misapprehensions, he is always absolutely himself. For what he takes from others he absorbs so completely that it becomes in a sense a part of himself; and it is precisely in his errors and misapprehensions that the inward driving force of his nature, which never allows him to stop half-way, is especially conspicuous. In the same way his intercourse with other people is entirely free from the chronic anxiousness of those who reduce piety to laws, and who, like the Puritans, in their fear of committing a sin, too easily forget to do good; free also from the deep calculations of pious politicians and pedagogues, who, like Loyola, are perpetually thinking of the impression which their conduct may make on others, and who, therefore, in every deed they venture, every word they speak, every gesture and expression of feeling which they allow themselves, never lose sight of the object to be attained; free, lastly, from the mistrust, caused by ascetic anxiety or cautious policy, which characterises the representatives of both these typical forms of non-Lutheran piety in their dealings with other human beings. It is true that in theory he declares all men, himself foremost among them, to be fundamentally bad. But only in theory. In practice, as he says himself, he takes all men to be good, or at least capable of betterment. How many times his confidence is deceived, his good nature abused in the basest way by thorough swindlers, male and female! We will mention only the pretended Rosine von Truchsess, whom, after her unmasking, on the promise that she will tell no more lies, he still harbours for months in his house as a guest, until she finally discloses herself as a common thief and prostitute. Yet these experiences do not make him a cynic or a misanthropist, nor any more guarded in his speech and manners. Wherever he may be, not only in the pulpit or at the desk, but also in personal intercourse, he continues to reveal himself exactly as he is, without any fear of "giving himself away." He speaks freely from his heart and with the greatest frankness upon everything, even his own weaknesses, faults and errors, so that everyone who has to do with him knows at once all about that side of his character. He has absolutely no ambition, nor even any unconscious inclination, always to exercise an edifying influence, to be an example, to set himself up with solemn dignity as a model to a gaping world. Those who attach value to an outwardly edifying attitude therefore find him, even in the sixteenth century, too easygoing at times, and those to whom self-perfection, in any form, is the highest moral duty, still fail to find in him the necessary measure of self-control and self-discipline. They consider, quite rightly from their own point of view, that he "lets himself go" far too much, that he is far too unconsidered in his behaviour, that he has too little of that delicate reserve which is the distinguishing mark of a good upbringing; yet he had every cause to watch himself carefully, for at home, at the Trivial Schools in Magdeburg and Eisenach, in the *Biertasche* and even at the monastery, he did not enjoy by any means such a good education as, for instance, Loyola. True, indeed! From the point of view of externals, Loyola, the well-bred gentleman, who never departs from the noble style of the Spanish grandee, and is so intent upon the outward and inward improvement of his ego that he even tries to keep a *graphic* record of his progress in virtue, or even Loyola's bourgeois counterpart, the well-bred gentleman Benjamin Franklin, who also follows the method of graphic registration, and ever strives to offer his neighbours the edifying spectacle of a model citizen—either of these appears more refined, more harmonious, more balanced, and far more suitable to be represented by teachers as an ideal figure, than the dissolute man of force, who "obviously" has not control over himself and so has absolutely no "style." Franklin, indeed, typical bourgeois that he was, hardly comes into consideration with a modern teacher. But Loyola was no bourgeois. He was, as Gasparo Contarini rightly said, the master of the affections. He really had complete self-possession, so complete that he never said a word out of place, never made a slip of the tongue, that every word, every quiver of his eyelid seemed premeditated, and that finally he was able to find God, *i.e.* have visions and revelations, whenever he liked. He is thus a classic example of the point which men can reach by this method of self-perfection. But does it follow that he was entirely without faults or weaknesses? No! the faults and weaknesses which are inherent in every earthly being are only concealed in such natures, sometimes so deeply that they are hardly perceptible to the naked eye. But for that very reason they remain alive in the spirit, and may therefore in certain circumstances lead to a complete poisoning of the inward life. This is especially probable if, in the process of educating the self, no place has been given to the old means of education which the Stoics invented long ago, to draw the passions out of the heart, and which Basil of Caesarea made supreme in monastic life with good results—confession, in the old Eastern sense of the term. It was partly because of these deadly effects, well known to him by his own experience, that Luther condemned these methods of self-perfection and self-discipline *en bloc* as an evil practice and a ghastly tormenting of the soul. For this reason in itself nobody can be fair to him who judges what he did, and what he left undone, by standards which have their origin in the ethic of self-perfection.

---

[1] Among his efforts must be considered the well-known passage in the letter from the Wartburg to Melancthon, August 1, 1521 (Corr., ed. Enders iii., 208) *Deus non facit salvos fictos peccatores. Esto peccator et pecca fortiter, sed fortius fide et gaude in Christo, qui victor est peccati, mortis et mundi; peccandum est, quamdiu hic sumus. Vita haec non est habitatio justitiae*," etc. Unfortunately, only a fragment of the letter remains, and what is most important of all, *i.e.* the letter from Melancthon to which it is the answer, is entirely lost. It is clear, however, that here, as so often, Luther is trying to help a melancholy subject who torments himself as to his sins and cannot console himself with the conviction of divine forgiveness. This particular connection should naturally not be left out of account; still less should the imperative be simply transformed into a prohibition, as by Denifle, who says that Luther forbade moral endeavour. What he forbids is continual worrying over sin, what he orders is the resolute grasping of the outstretched hand of Christ, which according to his conviction can alone gradually help the sinner out of his moral misery. The idea that it is better for a man that the sin which is already secretly present in him in the form of an evil impulse should express itself as an evil action, rather than remain hidden in his spirit and poison his inner life, is certainly not alien to his mind, for an evil desire is to him in itself a sin, and in his view more dangerous than an evil action. But I cannot remember having read any such utterance of his. He often remarks, however, that God purposely causes the self-righteous to fall into manifest sin, to open their eyes to their true selves, *cf. Werke*, v., 161. In this connection the *social* consequences of sin never enter his mind. But this is the same in the Gospel also, *cf.* Luke xv., 7: "Joy shall be in Heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance." This principle is an invincible stumbling block for every morality which turns its attention principally to the social consequences of the evil act and, like Calvinistic morality, considers the holiness of the community as more important than the moral improvement of the individual. But that is precisely the morality which the Gospel and Luther are combating, the morality which necessarily leads to self-righteousness, mere formalism in culture, and thus to hypocrisy or cant. Anglo-American cant is thus to be regarded entirely as a by-product of Calvinistic piety.

Closely connected with this is another trait of the reformer's character which likewise has often received sharp criticism. Whereas Loyola seeks to order and regulate everything in the lives of his disciples, down to the cut of their coats, the breadth of their collars and the position of their slippers and other articles under the bed, nothing is so repugnant to Luther as giving laws of this kind for matters of outward physical life. Remembering his own experiences in his Catholic days, he holds that such laws are all too apt to become chains upon the soul and fetters for unhappy consciences. All laws, therefore, so far as they are indispensable, should in principle be guided and *ruled* by *love*, and every man should strive to remain on good terms with God and his conscience. Then laws and regulations will no longer be necessary. In harmony with this view, his house was never conducted so absolutely according to rule as the Roman College. Really bad habits and serious offences against morality could, of course, not be permitted in anyone. But severe as he could be in such cases, he was anything rather than one of those unbending domestic patriarchs who cannot rest till they have turned their house into a kind of well-managed reformatory. His children had far more freedom and pleasure than he himself had enjoyed.[1] To the young people in his hostel he was more like an older friend than a strict disciplinarian; while in all questions of domestic economy and household arrangement the "Doctoress" had such absolute authority that the malicious tongues of the little town were ever whispering the taunt that she was the real master in the house. Naturally, among the twenty to thirty young men and girls who were at times under the strict rule of the Doctoress there were occasional black sheep. A widowed niece once became secretly engaged to a student of twenty, much to the anger of the reformer; a nephew, to his extreme indignation, once came home drunk with his friends; another nephew, Florian von Bora, a mere child, once in 1542 secretly stole a knife from little Paul Luther, and had to be condemned, as a thief and a liar, to three days' corporal and moral punishment by his severe uncle. It is true then that all kinds of unpleasant incidents occurred in Luther's house, as for that matter they did in the Roman College too, but it cannot be said—which makes all the difference—that they occurred under Luther's eyes. He was often the last to hear of such scandals, or did not hear of them at all—a thing which can hardly have happened to Loyola in his house, for he was indeed incessantly overlooking his people, and used every means, even that of secret tale-bearing, to discover those who were lacking in zeal and forgetful of their duty among the great band of disciples.

More serious, from the point of view of middle-class morality, appears another peculiarity of the reformer's which also derives from his basic psychological attitude—his complete lack of any sense of economy. He was not only absolutely disinterested in money matters as regards his own person, as Loyola was too; he was also generous beyond all measure, and had obviously not the slightest idea of the value of money—which was by no means the case with Loyola. He could have become a rich man within a few years if he had let himself be paid for his lectures and books, if he had accepted the share in the rich Schneeberg silver mines [1] which the Elector offered him, if he had not so often refused valuable gifts, if he had not insisted on paying taxes like other citizens, and so on. But to all these "ifs" he always replied with a "but." The truth is that he had the strange idiosyncrasy of not wanting to become rich. Instead, therefore, of increasing his possessions and income, like any sensible citizen, he consciously allowed the finest opportunities to pass by unused, and threw away great sums in almsgiving on a gigantic scale to the deserving and undeserving poor, and in the maintenance of an ever-growing number of strange boarders in his house, who in many cases had not the slightest claim on him.

---

[1] His dog, while he was still living alone at the Black Monastery, had even greater freedom; it was even allowed to nibble at the Scriptures on the table. Later his dog still remained so dear to him that he imagined Paradise itself with immortalised dogs. Such affections are always noteworthy traits. People in whom there is "abounding love," such as good-natured children and child-like adults (*e.g.* Francis of Assisi), are always fond of animals and flowers.

But in other matters, too, the true middle-class virtues of forethought, caution, and prudent calculation seem to have been inexcusably lacking in him. He never saw more than the stretch of road immediately before his eyes. As to what came afterwards he did not distress himself, indeed he hardly even felt any curiosity. Thus he became a reformer, he himself did not know how. Even in after years he seemingly let himself be guided and led on like a "blind horse," without ever making a serious attempt to be the smith of his own fortunes. On closer consideration it soon becomes plain that he did not in reality merely follow an obscure inward urge or allow himself to be guided by his superabundant vitality. Certainly he rarely asked: What will be the consequences? As a rule he saw and fulfilled only the demands of the day. But if on any occasion he did not know what were the demands of the day, then he would ask himself, not: What will be the consequences?

---

[1] The Schneeberg share is mentioned, *Table Talk*, No. 3471.

but simply: What must I do to justify myself before God and my conscience? Thus, to him, conscience must perform the functions which middle-class morality assigns to prudent forethought. Conscience was the compass by which he invariably steered and made his decisions, made them so irrevocably that all the crucial actions of his life seem to have been determined by this absolutely irrational factor. With rational people such as Loyola, the various stages of their progress through life can usually be indicated exactly by the plans and intentions formed by them after long and thorough rumination and calculation; in Luther's case they are indicated by the decisions of conscience made, for the most part, in the space of a moment, and always inexorably adhered to. It will be understood from this that he was always an object of anxiety, annoyance and dismay to the major and minor politicians of his acquaintance, from Friedrich der Weise down to the excellent Magister Philippus, who were always profoundly concerned with the question of consequences, and partly for that reason practised the "evil, mean and dirty arts" of astrology with such fervour and credulity. For, indeed, though he was not altogether lacking in political vision, this aspect of his character disqualified him entirely as a politician.

But precisely because his only serious care was to remain on good terms with God and his conscience, he did not worry deeply about other things, least of all the final victory of his cause. Not only did he sing: "Though the world were full of devils, yet we must succeed"—he was really unshakeably convinced at all times that "we *must* succeed." But this confidence was a very different thing from the light-headed assurance of those incorrigible optimists and philanthropists who fail to see, and indeed refuse to see, the obstacles which stand in the way of their plans and wishes. He saw and felt these obstacles, oppositions and contradictions most keenly—more keenly, for instance, than Magister Philippus, and was never so presumptuous as to believe that he could conquer them unaided. But he had unconditional trust in his God.

In consequence he regarded the great and severe outward struggles he had to undergo, fundamentally only as tests of faith, and so these struggles were never hateful to him; on the contrary, he welcomed them. Even in the days of his suffering old age, he is never so youthfully fresh and joyous as when his God requires yet another hazardous deed of him. Then the *great* struggles, the *inward* struggles, leave him; then he forgets at once all the small annoyances and vexations which are far more trying to his nerves than the great outward battle. For in this respect, as in others, he is quite differently constituted from Magister Philippus, as he himself remarks: he finds small vexations far harder to bear than his friend, yet great troubles and blows of fate, under whose weight the little man is at once "half dead" with fear and anxiety, leave him calm and make him, indeed, more cheerful than usual. Fundamentally, he does not know what anxiety is, the petty, base, everyday anxiety which as a rule torments most sorely those self-righteous and self-assured people who believe that they can, and must, do everything by their own unaided powers.

Even stranger to him than the sense of anxiety was the allied sense of fear. In 1527 and 1535, when the plague broke out in Wittenberg, he was the only professor besides Bugenhagen who remained calmly at his post to comfort and care for the sick and dying. The sophistical consideration that he ought to save himself for the sake of his family and his work made not the slightest impression on him; and, unlike Calvin in a similar case, he completely ignored the "gracious request" of the temporal authorities to withdraw into safety without delay, although in general, also unlike Calvin, he unquestioningly respected the wishes and commands of his temporal superiors in all material things. He had, indeed, so little sense as to take victims of the plague into his house and touch them with his own hand. Death, martyrdom, dishonour, contempt, or any plots of his opponents, he feared just as little as infectious disease. Thus he lived out his great song of defence and defiance in the sight of the German nation, and showed at the same time what can be done in the hour of danger and responsibility by one man who does not place his trust in human aid and wisdom. For at sight of him his people always recovered courage if they were on the point of despair, and a brave word from him was sometimes enough to make men and heroes even of the cravens who were for ever talking of a truce, like Melancthon and the Saxon councillors at Augsburg in 1530. For this reason, unlike the timid Magister Philippus, he was in *important* questions never in favour of concessions. But does this mean that Melancthon was more tolerant than he? No: where he had nothing to fear, Magister Philippus would not concede one jot or tittle, but insisted on his rights with a violence and obstinacy which seemed quite out of harmony with his otherwise amiable and obliging disposition. Such an uncompromising and pedantic attitude was entirely alien to Luther. Provided "nothing was added to or taken from the Gospel," he let all men "by all means use their Christian freedom as they pleased, how, when and as long as matters seemed to indicate and require it." Thus this case is proof of the old rule that timid, fearful people are at heart far less gentle, and far more rarely possess the ability to let others follow their own line, to forgive and forget, than strong natures who are absolutely firm in their convictions and free from care, fret and fear. Mightily as Luther could rage, he never hated anyone as Melancthon hated Flacius, and never showed himself so utterly irreconcilable, so venomous, so bitter, so diabolically malicious as Melancthon in his quarrel with the coarse, tactless, passionate, but honest Illyrian, who was always willing to be reconciled, and on whom Melancthon at last, by the vilest imputations, tried to bring the fate of Servetus. Luther was in fact entirely free from any tendency to resentment, while Melancthon, as his conduct in other cases also proves, was not. If, for example, we remember all that Karlstadt did to the reformer, we are amazed that the latter not only used his influence with the Elector in favour of his old opponent—who was only hiding his anger and hatred and still publicly blamed Luther before everyone as the sole cause of his misfortune—but secretly took him into his house at the end of June 1525 and kept him there for months as a friend, though he had only just married, and though he knew very well that Karlstadt, "after the manner of such spirits, would not abate his opinion." It is natural therefore that he should show no susceptibility to the apparently more harmless forms of resentment, grudging envy, jealousy, ingratitude. When he thinks of old times, his heart overflows with praise and thankfulness to God and the men who have stood by him and helped him. Indeed, his utterances concerning Staupitz, for instance, prove that he rated the merits of those who helped him to deliverance from the toils of Satan and to the true Gospel ever higher as the years went by—that is, he involuntarily magnified them, instead of lessening them, as people in their old age usually do. If he happens to compare himself with others, he never betrays the inclination to belittle their gifts and achievements and puff himself up. On the contrary, he appreciates gladly, even enthusiastically, any quality that he can find to appreciate; he even admires and sets others quite honestly and sincerely above himself. How much did he *admire* Magister Philippus; how greatly did he overestimate not only the gifts and achievements but also the character of this "admirable little man"; how patiently he bore with the well-known weaknesses of his great friend; how much he loved him! This, again, is only an expression of the same essential psychological attitude, a correct understanding of which must form the starting-point of any appreciation of his individuality. He was a man of faith, and felt ever in his soul something of the inspiring force of that "abounding love" which he so often praised. It was this which made him free from fear and anxiety, free from envy and jealousy, petty vengefulness and petty selfishness; free also from the punctilious correctness, reserve, the studied solemnity and dignity which are constantly seeking to edify, instruct or set an example; free from the anxious caution which, endlessly weighing the question: What will be the consequences? never ventures anything whole-heartedly, or at least, before venturing anything, requires assurances and guarantees for the future. Thus his essential nature represents the perfect antithesis of the type of character which has gradually developed since the sixteenth century and is still regarded as the normal embodiment of a "good European"; the perfect antithesis of the gentleman, the bourgeois and the "good citizen"; and in consequence will never be rightly understood by the gentleman, the bourgeois or the good citizen. But he is not simply the representative of a different bio-psychical type which has merely by chance assumed a religious uniform. His character is rather the work of religion, the product of the religious renewal which he experienced, the result of that mysterious encounter with his God which surprised him "midway in his life's course," and which remained for ever a mystery and a secret to him, whose profound causes he never attempted presumptuously to explain.

But no one realised better than he that "the old Adam remains ever hanging round our necks," whatever pains we may take to rid ourselves of him. He remained hanging round Luther's neck, as has been circumstantially demonstrated, and often made him stumble. The most frequent cause of this was a trait which we have as yet only touched upon, the trait which Hegel calls the parody of character, and which is therefore usually strongest in the strongest characters—self-will. He named himself "*Eigensinnissimus*," and he was indeed *eigensinnissimus*. This showed itself particularly in the theological struggles which he fought out with former friends and allied spirits. In these he was sometimes dogmatic to the point of wrong-headedness. It also showed itself occasionally in his attitude towards the persons who stood nearest to him. The high-handed obstinacy with which he tried to drive Katharina von Bora into marrying Glatz and urged Melancthon to go over to the theological faculty are only the best-known examples. Katharina, to her good fortune, had none of that helpless acquiescence which the Germans are so apt to regard as the finest flower of noble womanhood. Not only did she defend herself most resolutely on this occasion, but later, as "Doctoress," she maintained her position towards her "dear lord" so valiantly and cleverly that the dear lord, half in jest and half in admiration, called her not only his "chain" but also his "Master Käthe," his Moses and his gracious mistress. Melancthon was of a much more feminine nature than this proud, daring, energetic and remarkably ready-tongued woman. He did, indeed, defend himself too. But he had always to force himself to it, and always made himself perfectly miserable in the process, for his was not an open nature and he was always a little afraid of the strong man at his side. Therefore he never ventured to give vent to the theological differences which severed him from the ageing "Pericles." On the contrary, he carefully avoided any serious expression of them, held his peace and effaced himself as well as he might, like a frightened little schoolboy expecting a stroke from the teacher's cane at any minute. No wonder that in these circumstances his life with his master, sincerely as he honoured him, eventually seemed to him like pure slavery, and that he drew a deep breath like one set free when those powerful dark eyes, beneath which he had so often trembled, were at last closed for ever. He, naturally, made Luther alone responsible for this martyrdom. But he betrayed the true cause in the admission: "Perhaps I am somewhat servile by nature." He was, in truth, servile, and in that respect the exact opposite of Luther. Outwardly he always seemed ready to take a subordinate place, to serve, and be a mere assistant to his greater friend. But in his heart he desired to "live his own life," whereas Luther *appeared* to live his own life, but in reality was ever striving to serve, not himself, but his God and the true Gospel.

Melancthon's inward attitude to Luther is a very instructive example of how a great man, quite unsuspectingly, oppresses those around him, so that in the neighbourhood of such a superman precisely those of his companions who are of most intellectual eminence, and who are capable and desirous of independent achievement, gradually form a secret grudge which may poison the whole relationship and finally become utterly intolerable to the weaker party. Karlstadt is another typical example of the same thing. But just though this observation is, it is not a sufficient explanation of the strange fact that, little by little, nearly all the more important of the reformer's allies and confederates became at least inwardly estranged from him as he grew older. The phrase "He suffered the loneliness of genius" is no explanation at all, but merely a veiled admission of ignorance. The cause of this phenomenon is undoubtedly to be sought rather in the character of the reformer. But where are we to place the probe?

It is still often maintained that this outward and inward isolation, which increased with the passing of the years, was the natural consequence of the reformer's unrestrained violence and the unbridled character of his polemics. But the generation of his day was not so sensitively constituted as that. It did not feel the blows which Doctor Martinus struck with his "swine-stick" by any means so deeply as the "needle and bodkin-pricks" of Magister Philippus,[1] the venomous envy of Erasmus, or the mocking superciliousness of Erasmus' pupil Zwingli. The cause lies deeper; not in the reformer's passionateness, but in his dogmatic obstinacy and in the crippling influence which mediaeval tendencies and ideas continued to exercise in some degree upon his thought, even after his breach with the old Church. How much that influence could on occasion dim his perception of what was right, and how much that trait of character could lead him to persist in wrong opinions we have already seen in the case of the Hessian marriage mistake. But it is even more clearly to be recognised in his conduct during the dispute on the sacraments. It has often been said that he was never greater than in that fateful hour at the castle of Marburg when he rejected Zwingli's proffered hand. And it is very true that hardly any moment of his life revealed so clearly what was the strongest force of his soul and the final cause of his significance in the world's history—his uncompromising truthfulness and conscientiousness, which made it a moral impossibility for him to do anything against his conscience for the sake of political or other external advantages. But hardly any moment, also, showed so strongly that fatal weakness which was to estrange the best and most gifted of his intellectual sons from him. This weakness did not consist in the difficulty he found in understanding Zwingli's way of thought, or any way of thought but his own. For Zwingli, as he felt very rightly, had indeed a very different spirit. He was prepared to make apparent concessions in doctrinal questions for the sake of political advantages, but, as his marginal notes to the Marburg Articles prove, only *apparent* concessions. Had this "holy dissimulation" succeeded, he would unquestionably have seized the next favourable opportunity to make his doctrine supreme, with the help of Philipp of Hesse, in Lutheran regions also. Therefore when Butzer later, in order to make possible the entry of the Upper German Imperial cities into the league of Lutheran States, carried the "sacred dissimulation" a little further and extended it to the doctrine of the Eucharist, Zwingli himself suddenly declared that a union carried out in spite of such a secret divergence of doctrine could only be a transient and unreal thing. Why did he judge Butzer's gesture thus? Because it would have put an end once and for all to the great plan of bringing about a political league of all the evangelical States under the auspices of all the Zürich theologians. But did he not weep when Luther thrust him off? He wept, indeed, but not out of injured love—out of regret that the "ignorant, stiff-necked, impudent Luther" had subjected him to a political defeat. It is also quite true that the difference on the eucharistic doctrine concealed a profound difference in the whole religious outlook of the two men, of which both Luther and Zwingli immediately became sharply aware. Zwingli's Christianity had a definite moralistic and intellectual stamp, whereas with Luther the religious interest was dominant throughout. Like all great Christians, from St. Paul to Schleiermacher, he felt the inward need not only to *think* the personal communion with his Lord and Master, but actually to experience it through Communion. Zwingli did not understand this need at all. Calvin, as Luther realised at once, not only understood it but felt it himself, and tried in his doctrine of the Eucharist to give it satisfaction in a new way. Luther chose a different path. He created no new doctrine, but, in order to keep the sacramentalists and the Anabaptists at bay, seized upon old scholastic theories, and in the heat of the conflict so obstinately upheld these ancient teachings, which were absolutely at odds with his new basic religious principles, that a genuinely mediaeval feature was brought back into his theology, a reminiscence of the old conception of the nature of grace and its efficacy, bound up with the performance of special purely material acts. That he never recognised this mistake, and never would recognise it, was a fateful thing for himself and for the future of his life-work, for it was by this more than anything else that he alienated the boldest, freest and also the most pious spirits of his age. More important still, it was by this that a breach was made in the still incomplete defences of the new Church, which was soon used by the allied theologians and lawyers of the next generation to smuggle in all kinds of other antiquities, such as the Catholic conception of the clerical office, the doctrine of *principia* and the moral philosophy of Thomas Aquinas, the scholastic method and casuistic treatment of morals, the metaphysics of Suarez and even the canon law, which Luther had so passionately condemned, and finally to bring about that ignoble state of affairs, bitterly mocked by Samuel Pufendorf, in which Lutheran scholarship unashamedly shook hands with its deadly enemies, the Jesuits.

---

[1] *Table Talk*, No. 348.

Herein lies the real answer to the question which, since

Lessing's day, every man of any note in Germany must submit to: the question as to the "tragic moment" in Luther's life. The aesthetic law-givers of the Germans, who have eagerly sought this tragic moment in Luther's case as in others (*e.g.* Gustav Freytag), find the tragic element mainly in a state of mind which they call "tragic guilt" and which, according to their theory, ever explodes in an outward catastrophe. Yet the term tragic guilt would be more correctly replaced by *tragic innocence*, and it should be added that the tragedy may manifest itself not in a violent catastrophe, but sometimes in the form of an insidious crisis. The latter applies, for instance, to Luther's case; but with him the tragic element consists in nothing but the inward disharmony with the hard-won principles of his new religious conception which arose in him through the disputes on the sacraments, and in the blind zeal and obstinacy with which, in order to defend a belief which was dear to him, he ran astray into an entirely obsolete doctrine, without ever once considering the question whether this doctrine did not threaten his most sacred convictions, and whether there were not other ways of doing justice to the belief in question. Thus the passion which, guided by a clear perception of the essential and important, had once led him victoriously forward, now drove him with blinded eyes backwards. This peripety, unlike a similar situation in the life of his favourite pupil Flacius, so much akin to him in spirit, did not lead to a catastrophe, but it caused a kind of stunting of his intellectual interests; while the evangelical movement was suddenly blocked, and later on became more and more bogged between the defensive dams, all too closely set, of orthodox Lutheranism. The violence with which he carried through this turn of affairs, and dragged most of his following with him, is the clearest example of the "daemonic" element in his character, another element which, since Goethe's day, the Germans have ever sought for with passionate fervour. But his conduct on that occasion betrays no less clearly a defect in the structure of his mind: he had never the instinct to think out his thoughts to their very end. He was not a man of systems. That was his greatness, but also his fate; and it was the greatness and fate of the new Church which, against any wish of his, in the seventeenth century chose as its designation the old term of opprobrium, "Lutheran."

CHAPTER V

THE THINKER AND PROPHET

LUTHER was the author of several hundred books and pamphlets. But all these works bear more or less the character of *œuvres de circonstance*, written each for some particular occasion or purpose. Not one of them offers a complete, far less a systematically arranged, survey even of his religious and theological ideas, to say nothing of a clear presentation of all the consequences he deduced from them for the ordering of individual and communal life. Not one gives a clear conception even of the theoretical assumptions from which he started, or of the principles and practical ideas which formed his standards of judgment in economic, social, political or pedagogic problems. Not he, but Melancthon, first undertook the very necessary task of putting together the fundamental thoughts of the evangelical message in a brief survey. This survey, regarded as the first attempt of its kind, is undoubtedly a great achievement, but a systematic person will have many, in fact very many, faults to find in it. However, it satisfied Luther perfectly; indeed, it seemed to him an unsurpassable, classical, canonical achievement, superior to all his own work in value and usefulness to the world at large. This is a proof that he made no great pretensions on this point himself, and also that he regarded the "beautiful ornament of system" not as a superfluous adornment but on the contrary as an indispensable requisite of theological thought, and only refrained from performing that necessary and useful task himself because he felt incapable of it. Indeed, his peculiar education in itself seemed to make him far less fitted for this kind of work than little Magister Philippus. As a pupil of the "moderns" he had certainly learnt to think and to criticise, but he had never been trained to pay attention to the consistency of his various religious and theological thoughts, to arrange them in order, link them up, or even collect them together. Indeed, the purely critical method of the moderns, concerned entirely with the exposition of ecclesiastical dogmas in innumerable isolated problems, systematically drove out in his youth the tendency in this direction, which he did originally possess in some degree.

In recent times it has certainly been maintained that this traditional judgment as to the unsystematic character of his thought is unjust. Little as he may have set out to do so, he had, it has been said, a system to form, and therefore necessarily possessed a system, and a system "which in its most characteristic doctrines is remarkable for its strict consistency." This system was very closely connected with that of the moderns; from the moderns, from Occam, came the idea which is to be regarded as the organising principle of his theological thought—the idea of the truthfulness of God. The only difference between him and Occam, according to this theory, was that Occam, in vindication of the truthfulness of God, demanded unconditional submission to *all* the words and doctrines of Holy Writ, whereas Luther, in agreement with Augustine, was content to designate the *plain* and *clear* utterances of the Bible as the revelation of the truthful God, worthy of unconditional credence. But, in reality, can even the basic thoughts of Luther's theology be derived from this idea alone? No; certainly not the basic thought which he himself always regarded as his fundamental article—the article of justification. This article could never have gained such unique significance for him if his theological thought had consistently followed that purely formal principle which assures all the plain, clear utterances of the Old and New Testament to be of absolutely equal worth and importance, whether they deal with the waters over the citadel of Heaven or with salvation through Christ. But he did not in fact arrive at this article by means of that principle at all; on the contrary, only when he had realised through "divine illumination" the meaning of the verse on the righteousness of God did he arrive at his especial doctrine of the Bible. This conclusion is not disproved by the observation that he himself now and then referred to justification as an effect of the truthfulness of God. For what does "truthfulness of God" mean in this case? Simply the faithfulness and steadfastness with which God fulfils His promises. The idea of the truthfulness of God is not, therefore, either clearly and unambiguously conceived by him, nor does it entirely govern his theological thought. In reality he works not on one but on two principles or general ideas; but the dominant idea is always the one of justification. Only in his writings on the Eucharist, in which he is defending an old school theory of Occam's quite in Occam's own style, does the idea of the truthfulness of God come foremost. But important as it is for the understanding of these writings to keep this in view, it would be very rash to make these same writings the basis for a reconstruction of his theology.

This being the case, all would yet have been well if he had carefully kept these two ideas apart from one another. But did he? He never even attempted to do so. Strict consistency cannot, therefore, with the best will in the world, be discovered in his system; it is in fact impossible to find any means of forcing his various conceptions into one system. In spite of all the efforts that have been made in this direction, the two branches of doctrine which he developed—the doctrine of justification, in which his new religious thoughts are represented, and the doctrine of the sacraments, which in many respects only carries further the Occamist teaching—persist in swerving away from each other. And whereas other thinkers as a rule seek in later life to reconcile the contradictions in their systems, Luther let himself be forced by the dispute on the Eucharist to develop the contradiction between the two branches of doctrine more and more sharply, so that it reveals itself much more conspicuously in his later writings than in those of the year 1520–1 or in the classic first presentation of his teachings, Melancthon's theological principles of 1521. His view of the universe, as a whole, especially if only its "characteristic doctrines" are taken into account, therefore resembles a building of peculiarly mixed style. Anyone definitely setting out to look for contradictions, as Sebastian Franck did for his own entertainment (1531 *Geschichtsbibel*), will have no great trouble in discovering a dozen or two dozen; so little misgiving did he feel in laying particular stress on one or the other doctrine, especially in his polemics and sermons, and occasionally in giving rein to his tendency towards paradox. By admitting this we detract nothing from his greatness or the importance to world history of his teaching; rather do we open the way for the first time to a truly fruitful understanding of his genius. Only when we resolutely abandon any attempt to systematise his various utterances, and allow them to sink into our minds without any weakening or distortion, just as he put them on paper, warm and glowing with joy or with anger, do we receive a full impression of the inexhaustible force, abundance, boldness and originality of his mind; and this amazing ease in the production of ideas is very closely related to his lack of system. By the strenuous endeavour to build up a closed system, the inclination to admit new ideas, and also the capacity to conceive new ideas, are naturally much restricted and indeed gradually killed, whereas in the opposite case the mind remains ever open to new impressions and is able to respond unchecked to any stimulus to form new ideas. It may therefore be stated that the reformer's lack of system was a necessary consequence of his vast intellectual fertility and therefore one of the necessary conditions of his influence on the world's history. Truly systematic minds, such as Calvin, are never creative thinkers, and on the other hand creative thinkers are as a rule not men of system. And if men of system are not exactly plentiful, creative thinkers are nevertheless rarer still, especially in the sphere of religion and ethics; and because they are rarer, they exert a weightier and more lasting influence than the men of system. They alone really create something new, unbind new forces and found new orders of historical life, whilst the man of system usually receives the more modest task of organising and concentrating the new forces and ideas, whereby admittedly, as Calvin's example again shows, their influence on the contemporary world and posterity is as a rule notably strengthened.

Where the tendency and ability to concentrate oneself and resist new impressions are present in so slight a degree, it is natural that the change and development undergone in the course of time by the contents of the mind should leave clearer traces than in the case of the born systematic thinker, who criticises every new thought as it occurs in accordance with the principles of his system. Childhood, adolescence, manhood, the heritage of the family, the heritage of the school, the acquisitions of later years, are often plainly discernible, like the rings in the trunk of a tree, even in the finished "system" of such thinkers; and in spite of all the intervening changes, in spite of the natural decay and the violent eradication of certain component ideas, the final whole still indicates so clearly the gradual growth of the intellectual possessions that it is possible to attempt a genetic analysis of the whole system by a study of the various strata which compose it. In our particular case such an analysis is not only useful, but imposes itself as a duty. For the question has arisen again and again regarding Luther: What did he receive from his age? What did he contribute to his age? The sixteenth century did not, indeed, set itself this problem; it hated or admired, but did not analyse. All the more eagerly has the nineteenth century busied itself with the question. For the nineteenth century sees in a great individual no longer a manifestation of divine or diabolical powers, but a problem, and it is inclined to solve this problem like an arithmetic sum, taking the great individual simply as the sum or product of existing energies, in which the law of the conservation of energy finds confirmation even in the world of the mind. This method is apt to lead its exponents astray into a new mythology. Concepts which may be very sound in the sphere of zoology or botany, such as heredity or environment, are applied without modification to the phenomena of historical life, which they purport to elucidate but in fact only obscure; and if they do not suffice, a case of atavism is hastily postulated, as in Taine's characterisation of Napoleon. For all hypotheses are permitted, so the words "mystery," "incomprehensible," "enigma" be not heard. But this view would never have found such favour had it not been based upon a just observation: the observation that even genius belongs in a certain sense to the mass, and that the mass to a certain extent shares in the achievements of genius. We have seen how much Luther was a child of his age in his literary usages and his habits of life. This realisation in itself makes it our duty to examine how far he was a child of his age as regards his outlook and beliefs. Preliminary work for such an examination is not lacking; indeed it would seem that the examination itself is already concluded. When Harnack states that Luther was in the *periphery* of his existence an Old-Catholic and mediaeval phenomenon; when Wundt declares that Luther brought humanity not a new religion but a new ethic, this ethic being, however, only a reflex of the mighty vitality of the Renaissance period; when Wernle lays it down that neither Luther nor Lutheranism possessed an ethic, and Tröltsch adds that Old Protestantism is in its essential features and manifestations merely a transformation of the mediaeval idea—then it would seem that we have only to combine and add up these judgments and the problem is solved. How simple! All that seemed exceptional, incomprehensible, original in the phenomenon of the reformer is carefully eliminated; the "prophet" is degraded to the rank of a quite ordinary human being. Only one enigma remains, and that has strictly nothing to do with Luther as an individual; it is concerned with general historical evolution: the question how it happens that certain persons become points of concentration for the forces and ideas of their age. But this apparently most simple solution of the Luther problem presupposes the solution of a whole series of other difficult problems, upon which agreement is not yet in sight. Anyone who wishes to make no mistake will therefore seek first to enter into these separate problems, and to answer the comparatively simple question: What does the reformer owe to his home and his school, and how far does he merely utter ideas and judgments which others have expressed before him?

First, therefore, let us carry ourselves back four hundred years into the home of the miner, Hans Luther of Mansfeld. Miners were from very early days much inclined to superstition. But in the house of the Luther family superstition was stronger and more profound than in the remotest mountain village of to-day. For here the superstition of a mining village was reinforced by the no less extreme superstition of the Thuringian peasantry. The good people really lived in continual fear of all conceivable kinds of monsters and kobolds, magicians and witches, devils great and small, clever and foolish. Even when a natural explanation offered itself quite easily, as for instance when her little children cried more persistently than usual, the much harassed Mother Margarete thought at once that her neighbour was a witch; and Father Hans had no doubt that she was right, and that their little son must die because he had been bewitched. This strong belief in devils and witches was inherited by Doctor Martinus intact, like the inexhaustible store of popular proverbs, jokes, sarcastic and insulting epithets which his mother and father had at their command; it was indeed notably increased during his years at school, at the university and in the monastery. Even as a mature man, therefore, he never merely suggests the possible case "if the world were full of devils"—to him the world indubitably *is* full of devils: in forest and field, in house and yard, around men and within them, the evil spirits are ever at work. In the form of goats they make forest and marsh unsafe. They scurry through the air in the form of leaping flames or dragons, and as water-sprites in rivers draw bathers down into the depths. Even their overlord Satan occasionally does not disdain to appear in visible shape; to men he assumes preferably the form of a beautiful girl, to women that of a dashing young squire with a green hat and blue feather. For the more he must submit to "Frau Mutter" down below in his "inn," the more boldly does he appear on earth. He is said to have been seen, too, as a grey monk, a hermit, a parson, a dragon, a calf, a goat, and a horned gentleman. Besides this, there is probably some element of him in cats, monkeys, parrots and those peculiar caterpillars whose hind parts, most suspiciously, are adorned with a little horn. But as a rule evil spirits hover and weave their snares invisibly around and within human beings, ever ready to do injury or murder to souls. They alarm good Christians now with floods, now with terrifying storms, now by causing cattle to die, now with frightful plagues. Worse still, they do not hesitate to enter into men, to rob them of their sound senses or drive them to evil courses. The lesser devils lead their victims into fornication, greed, vainglory and similar sins, the greater and more dangerous ones to melancholy, unfaith, despair and heresy. The Pope and other adversaries of the new evangel have thus become nothing but instruments of the Devil. It goes without saying that men can conclude formal pacts with the Evil One. In this way, for example, Dr. Eck, Joachim I of Brandenburg, and the famous Dr. Faust of Kundling, who plied his trade in Wittenberg in the fifteen-twenties until the Elector Johann ordered his arrest and he fled, pledged themselves to the Devil. Once, indeed, a Wittenberg student did the same thing. Women, however, are more frequently led astray by the Devil than men; then, as witches, they cause "wicked weather," lame men's limbs with the "witches' shot" (rheumatism), dry up the cows' milk, steal the skin from the live body of the sheep, and commit other shameful deeds. Such witches have many a time laid snares for Doctor Luther and his Käthe. It is no wonder, then, that the Doctor himself occasionally threatens these impudent "Devil's whores" and entirely shares the general opinion that, if they prove adamant to pious exhortations, they should be punished with death—not, however, on account of the harm they do to men, but on account of the continued blasphemies of which they are guilty. For blasphemy, by the prevailing law of the time, is a capital crime.[1] Fortunately, however, he is thoroughly acquainted not only with the works and instruments but also with the character of the Devil and his crew. He knows that the Prince of Darkness is a proud spirit and finds nothing harder to bear than contempt. Therefore he always displays contempt of him, often with very primitive gestures. Fear of the Devil is altogether strange to Luther. The consciousness of having to fight with the lord of this world perpetually, and yet of being able to overcome him with a word, only stimulates his glad sense of vigour. He is thus the best possible proof of Goethe's saying, "Superstition is a heritage of strong natures, capable of great deeds." Man, however, does not stand alone in his fight against evil spirits; the good spirits, the angels, whose commander is St. Gabriel, come to his aid. For just as every man has his private devil, so he has also his guardian angel, and if the devil is nearer to us than the shirt to the body, nearer even than the body itself, the angels are yet mightier, and above all wiser than they. They can therefore always, in case of need, give men good counsel, and at times even teach them the secrets of the future.

This popular belief in devils and angels, which he had sucked in with his mother's milk, the reformer clung to firmly throughout his life. He shared, too, the ancient belief in the evil prophetic significance of comets and eclipses of the sun and moon, and like all his contemporaries regarded human and animal abortions as signs of good or bad luck. And yet, strange as it sounds, he did more to reduce superstition than any man of his time, and was himself more enlightened than most educated people of those days—more enlightened, in particular, than the Italian freethinkers, so often lauded as ideal *Aufklärer*, such as Gemisthos Plethon,

---

[1] *Cf.* p. 291 f.

Codro Urceo, Machiavelli, Guicciardini. For as a true Occamist he despised and disdained most heartily all the detestable pseudo-sciences which the humanists had brought back into repute, and which were fervently cultivated even in the Curia—astrology, alchemy, geomancy, chiromancy, etc.; though even the good Magister Philippus could not restrain himself from taking part in these senseless practices, and sometimes was misled by his faith in them into foolish actions fraught with the gravest consequences.[1] Luther also would hear nothing of the exorcising of devils, then so much favoured; and a whole crowd of superstitious customs and ideas, for instance the belief that witches ride through the air on broomsticks and can change themselves into all sorts of animals, the belief in incantations and the magical efficiency of love-potions, fortune-telling by the finger-nails and the crystal, and nearly all the apotropaic usages, sometimes absurd, sometimes disgusting, which were still current at births, baptisms, burials, in cases of plague or of danger by fire or flood, were strenuously opposed by him even in his early years, and later abolished and suppressed in part. But did not his faith in devils become ever more wild, coarse and lugubrious as the years went by? No. That is an error of the recent inquisitors, no less mistaken than the frequently heard statement that the belief in witches, which was fundamentally nothing but a survival of old Germanic heathenism, was first established in the Protestant world by Luther. Here again we must beware of isolating him artificially, that is, regarding him as an independent phenomenon without regard to the beliefs of his time, or of tearing his thoughts and ideas out of their natural context. Grisar lays himself open to this latter charge when he emphasises Luther's conception of the Devil and demons, completely ignoring the deep and happy faith in God of which it is merely the foil. Our study of Luther the man of superstition must not blind us to Luther the man of faith, who did so much to combat superstition.

---

[1] The most famous example is the attitude he adopted towards the Augsburg Interim. On April 22, 1548, there had been an eclipse of the moon, from which he concluded that the Emperor would die in August. When in August the Emperor failed to oblige him by departing this life, he boldly placed his hopes on August 1549. Therefore he considered it quite safe to conciliate the Catholics for a time. Therefore, also, he committed the still greater folly of writing, immediately after the eclipse, that notorious letter to the Saxon minister Carlowitz, in which he complains about Luther and declares: "The ceremonies which the Interim prescribes I gladly accept, and will cause others to do likewise" (*Corpus Reformatorum*, vi., 850 ff.).

The heritage of the school is no less clearly discernible in the reformer's "system" than the influence of his home life. Many very characteristic examples in the domain of theology have already been introduced.[1] Here we will only mention that also in his political, social and economic views and reform principles he mainly kept closely to the tradition of the Occamists or other mediaeval authorities. He is following Occam, for instance, when he declares the care of the poor to be a function of the temporal administration, communal or territorial, when he describes it as the right and duty of the temporal power to remedy abuses in the public religious cult, when he offers the statement, very heretical to modern ears, that the temporal power is subject only to natural law or divine law and in certain circumstances indeed must override the written law. Not Occam himself, but the general mediaeval tradition is the origin of the differentiation between written (positive) law and natural law, which Luther always takes for granted, the conception which he always clung to of "Christianity" as the great international organisation of Christian society, ruled in material things by the secular powers and in spiritual things by God's word; his peculiar division of this society into three holy orders, *Lehrstand*, *Wehrstand* and *Nährstand*—the order which teaches (preachers and teachers), the order which protects (temporal lords and officials), and the order which feeds the community (peasants, artisans and merchants); his representation of the civil calling as an *office* in the service of society, and in particular his contention, very surprising to modern feelings, that the division of humanity into the classes of rulers and ruled, and the whole legal organisation based upon it, is a consequence of the Fall of Man. Even more mediaeval-sounding to the generation of to-day are his judgments of economic questions and necessities. The Middle Ages are entirely agrarian in their views. The artisan class is thought little of, industry and trade are regarded as disreputable branches of livelihood, and all purely financial affairs in which money plays the part of a productive factor are unhesitatingly damned. Luther's views are fundamentally the same. He frankly and freely upholds the mediaeval proverb: "A merchant can hardly be saved," declares all import trade a great evil, all finance, in so far as gain is its object, as superfluous and reprehensible, and would be very glad to condemn every little investor as an unchristian usurer.

---

[1] See p. 62 ff.

Even where he follows no tradition or authority, but draws entirely on his own stores, he is not always so absolutely new as he appears from a distance. Often he merely brings forward ideas and criticisms which were expressed long before in "heretical" communities and reforming circles. What he says, for instance, concerning the abuses of the papal Church government, the moral depravity of the monastic orders, the worldliness of the higher and lower clergy, the compulsory celibacy of the priests, indulgences, the cult of saints, relics and images, the enforcement of fasting by the Church, the excessive number of feast-days, and similar excrescences of the Catholic system, may be paralleled by numerous utterances in the accusatory literature, both heretical and Catholic, of the Middle Ages. The work which contains his principal criticisms of these external evils in the Catholic system, the "Address to the Christian Nobility," therefore offers, regarded as a whole, comparatively little that is absolutely new. Even his criticism of Catholic dogma is in many points anticipated by the Lombard and German Waldensians or the English and Bohemian followers of Wyclif. I will mention only the dogma of Purgatory, of transubstantiation, of confirmation, of the extreme unction. Even the affirmation that the Pope is Antichrist and Rome the Babylon of the Revelations is met with among the Lombard Waldensians. In Luther's criticism of the Catholic system, in fact, only three things are really new, his criticism of the Catholic view of sin and grace, of the Catholic conception of the sacraments and of the Catholic idea of the religious value of the ascetic life.

But there are scholars who go a great deal farther than that, and who refuse to regard Luther even as the first discoverer of the positive ideas and ideals which formed the starting-point of all his criticism, and there is indeed much to be said in favour of this opinion. The extraordinarily rapid and almost universal adherence of the citizen class to the evangelical movement, the solid alliance of the humanists with the Lutheran party, the mistaken idea, shared at first by so many educated and half-educated people, that Luther was carrying on the work of Erasmus, or was simply a member of his following, all this leads irresistibly to the question : Did not the new element in the reformer's work consist merely in the fact that he gave expression in a more effective form to realisations and demands which had long been current among the German middle classes and the humanistic friends of reform ? It is stated, for instance, that Luther was the first to restore St. Paul to honour and to revive Paulinism. But the humanist Marsilio Ficino and his pupils, John Colet and Jacques Lefèvre of Etaples, had already uttered the watchword : "Back to St. Paul," and not Luther but Lefèvre was the first to publish a commentary founded upon the original text and to employ Paulinistic ideas in criticism of the piety of the epoch. It is stated also that Luther was the first to recognise only one religious authority for Christians : Christ Himself, and the Bible in so far as it is concerned with Christ. But Erasmus of Rotterdam uttered the same conviction long before Luther, urgently demanding a return to the simple theology of Christ, a reform of theology, and, what is more important, a reform of the practices of piety on the model of the theology of Christ. This same Erasmus also recognised clearly that such a reform could only succeed if the simple teaching of Christ, which like the sunlight was intended to illuminate all the world, were made accessible to everyone ; accordingly in 1516, in the foreword to his first edition of the New Testament, he developed the altogether Lutheran idea of translating the Bible into all languages, and spreading it abroad in all languages, so that man and woman, young and old, gentle and simple could read the Gospels and the Epistles of Paul, and the peasant in the field, the artisan in the workshop and the traveller on the highroad might pass the time with Biblical phrases and songs. Lastly, it is stated that Luther first overthrew the external, formalist morality of the Middle Ages, denied the monastic estate the right to existence, and pointed to the family and the community, the state and the lay-calling as the normal sphere for the fulfilment of moral duty. But it seems as if Erasmus had anticipated him in this reform also. For as early as 1502, in the most famous of his edifying works, the *Enchiridion Militis Christiani*, he turned from the good works of the Church, without expressly condemning them, and repeatedly laid stress on the hardest point of the Law, the purification and sanctification of thought and feeling. At the same time he emphatically rejected the usual distinction between monastic and general Christian duties, and insistently represented Christ as the model and example for *every* man. But Erasmus is by no means the only witness that at the beginning of the sixteenth century a change of moral outlook was already preparing itself. In the numerous pamphlets, satirical verses and "Apocalypses" which precede the Reformation there is often manifested not only a truly fearful hatred of the idle parsons and monks, but sometimes an extravagantly high estimation of the pious, honest laymen and workers, *i.e.*, manual workers. Indeed the "worker" is the favourite figure of this literature; his activity is praised as a true divine service, his sweat is held as sacred and wonder-working as the blood of martyrs. Nothing shows how strong and widespread this feeling is more significantly than the fact that even monkish preachers, like the Leipzig Dominican Markus von Weida, pay tribute to it. This high valuation of the worker is sometimes accompanied by an almost adoring veneration of the "pious married folk." The author of the Apocalypse of St. Michael, for instance, declares marriage to be the sacrament of sacraments, and summons the pious married folk to combine in a Fraternity of St. Michael to reform Church and State, while he condemns monastic life unconditionally in all its forms. Here and there, indeed, open protests are already heard against the ascetic ideal. When about 1494 a leading citizen of Strassburg entered the Carthusian Order, certain "fools," complains the pious Sebastian Brant, had the temerity to argue: "God did not create us to become monks and priests and so cut ourselves off from the world. . . . It is not God's will that man should renounce the world." Such denials were certainly not frequent. But the frame of mind which is revealed in them already existed in widespread circles when Luther appeared, and even where the desire to flee from the world still had power over spirits, its representatives in many cases would have nothing of *monastic* asceticism, but, as the Baptist movement later shows, advocated the formation of communities after the early-Christian or Taborite model, to live the religious life in retirement from the world.

From all this it would really appear that Luther's message contained absolutely nothing new and original, and that Erasmus was not mistaken when he said that the Wittenberg monk had by his clumsy interference ruined the whole Reformation. The criticism and literary propaganda of the Christian humanists, the powerful intellectual movement, would of themselves, it seems, have led to a reformation, and a reformation as Erasmus wished it, free from all "tumult." Indeed there are still Erasmians to-day who faithfully repeat this judgment of the old humanist leader's. Anyone who does not consider world history in the perspective of the study will however find this theory just as brilliant as the statement that the Napoleonic Empire must have come about even without Napoleon, and German unity even without Bismarck. Critics and orators like Erasmus, dreamers like his counterpart the author of the *Michaelsapokalypse*, can perhaps call forth and strengthen an historical crisis, but they can never create new conditions. That can be accomplished only by the heroic will which soberly and resolutely takes up the struggle with the powers of the old order of things, and by the exertion of all the forces of mind and spirit carries it through to its last end. This heroic will, the rarest and mightiest of the creative powers in history, will hardly be denied Luther. But is he really distinguished from Erasmus and other similar advocates of reform only by the possession of this heroic will? Is he, as a thinker, only a sensitive and skilful interpreter of the ideas of his time, only the speaking-tube through which the soft murmur which was going about the land, united at last into a mighty cry, made itself heard; only the "prophet" who served the spirit of the age as Aaron served the taciturn Moses, taking the words from his mouth and transmitting them to the multitude? A brief examination of Erasmus and his forerunners, and of the leading representatives of the popular opposition, such as the author of the *Michaelsapokalypse*, will suffice to provide the right answer. Ficino, Colet, Lefèvre, Erasmus and his numerous kindred spirits, did revere St. Paul in the highest tones, but not even the most Christian of these Christian humanists, Lefèvre, rightly understood the great apostle, as Luther acutely observed in 1516—far less the sagacious Erasmus. The first announcement from the ranks of reform which does justice to St. Paul, not indeed entirely according to the letter, but according to the spirit, is therefore Luther's long-lost Commentary on Romans, from the year 1515. And, just as the humanists failed to understand St. Paul, so they failed to understand the other exponents of primitive Christian piety. For instance, what Erasmus praises with a great display of fine words as the philosophy of Christ is not the Christianity of the New Testament, let alone the "Christianity of Christ," but a moralism dressed up to pass for Christianity, in the style of Minucius Felix and other Catholic apologists, the principles of which are derived from the same authorities which Minucius follows—Cicero and Seneca. For in what, according to Erasmus, does the philosophy or theology of

Christ essentially consist ? In the new law or the ethic of asceticism, the belief in Providence and in a reward beyond the grave. Naturally there are to be found in his conception, as in that of Pelagius, who also studied St. Paul exegetically a great deal, occasional Paulinistic thoughts. But there is no vitality in these thoughts. He is entirely absorbed in his work only when he is presenting his philosophy of Christ. This of course does not exclude a very warm interest in Jesus as an individual, which again is found later in Pelagius and the Rationalists. Indeed this interest is in Erasmus' case remarkably vivid, as is shown by the prayer-books which he published during the last years of his life. But it reveals itself in a manner quite different from Luther's. It is expressed in the old forms of the *devotio moderna*, *i.e.* in the reverent contemplation of the life of Jesus, which he had learnt in the " collations " of the Brothers of the Common Life. It is therefore not the expression of a new kind of Christian piety, first established by himself. More important still, his moralism made him entirely unresponsive to the sacramental and ceremonial side of ecclesiastical religious practice. Strictly speaking, he could only appreciate the sacrament as a sign or symbol. It is therefore in the circles of his disciples and pupils, Cornelius Hoen and Zwingli, that this conception first appears. But it is a notable fact that his pupils, in this point as in others, draw the logical consequences of his critical reflections far more strictly than he does himself. He himself, as his dispute with Luther shows, never arrives at a definitive opinion even on the most important questions of faith. Like all people who form their convictions not by inward struggles, but gradually, by the methods of criticism and analytical thought, he never ceases to learn, to examine, to criticise, and in consequence never reaches a conclusive judgment even upon Luther and the papal Church. It is for this reason that he is especially highly esteemed by scholars and professors. For this is exactly the way in which scholars and professors deal with large philosophical questions. They like to remain in the safe domain of the knowable-yet-never-sufficiently-known, and therefore, in problems which extend beyond these limits, prefer a *non liquet* to any other decision. If they are also, like Erasmus, optimists by nature, and devoid of all profound interest in philosophy, then they have as a rule no feeling at all for any kind of religion as such, or believe, like Erasmus, that such questions can be settled as pure questions of education and decided by the deliberations of the learned. We may thus be permitted to doubt, as Luther and Loyola doubted, whether Erasmus was in the depths of his being a religious nature. Certainly he was, precisely because he had so eminently the make-up of a good professor, absolutely unfitted for the rôle of confessor or spiritual leader. That he felt called upon to act as a religious reformer, and was so regarded by his contemporaries, can nevertheless be well understood. At times when the public religious practice gives so little satisfaction to the religious needs of the educated classes, there is always a tendency to see a reformer in every critic and moralist who replaces the old dogmas, which have become incomprehensible, by a seemingly clear and simple ethical belief, and the critic himself usually shares this pious illusion.

It is therefore not surprising that later on the Erasmians either, like Zwingli and Capito, joined the evangelical movement or, like Erasmus himself, Julius Pflug, Gropper and Witzel, entered more or less zealously into the service of the Catholic Counter-Reformation. The few religious ideas on which they were nourished were admirably well-adapted to the criticism of popular religion and of the enormously complicated theology of the Church; for a time, through their apparent simplicity and clarity, they might offer the educated classes, who were becoming more and more estranged from the Church, a substitute for the clear, simple religious ideas, satisfying to the claims of serious morality, whose absence was so deeply felt in the public religious practice existing. But they were far too general and too lacking in force to satisfy the religious need for long. Therefore they inevitably lost their influence over men's minds as soon as some richer and more powerful conviction competed with them, whether it were Luther's "philosophy of faith" or the Mysticism of Loyola. The ethical ideas of Erasmus, closely regarded, appear even more incomplete than his religious ideas. He did indeed occasionally protest against the differentiation between lay and monastic morality, and contend emphatically that a teacher who gave instruction to children was accounted before God superior to a monk; but in spite of his absolutely fanatical hatred of the monastic order as it then existed, it never occurred to him to strike at the root of the tree by denying the legitimacy of the old ascetic ideal. On the contrary, in consequence of his dependence on the eclectic stoicism of Roman philosophy, he remained all his life *in theory* an ascetic, and therefore had no understanding whatever of the moral value of the great moral communities, marriage, the family, the State, nor any clear notion of the moral significance of ordinary work. Instead, he was fond of wandering among communistic dreams and fancies. But they were only fancies. In practice he was anything rather than a communist. It is thus hardly too much to say that even as a moralist he never arrived at entirely firm and conclusive convictions. Far more serious than this great *littérateur*, who quite frankly admitted that he had not a drop of the blood of the martyr in his veins, far more serious also than the other Christian humanists, were the spokesmen of the popular opposition. The unknown author of the *Michaelsapokalypse* may be regarded as their classic representative. Here one may really see an honest and strenuous search for new moral standards, but how terribly confused, how obscure, how wild and fanatical all these well-meaning regenerators of the world are! They all worship to a greater or less degree the most absurd socialistic dreams of the future, refuse to recognise as work anything but heavy manual labour, and are all in some way still under the ban of the Church's ascetic ideal. Our author, for instance, combats very vigorously the overestimation of fasting, but fasting as such he still regards as a good work. He deems celibacy a great sin, yet the celibacy of the priests seems to him so necessary that he recommends the most merciless regulations to protect this institution—among others, that the children of priests should simply be left to starve. Even the "fools" of Strassburg who protested so energetically against the flight of Brant's friends into the Carthusian Order cannot be declared antagonists of the ascetic *principle* without some other proof besides the above-mentioned verse of the old humanist. In short, the whole of the lay opposition to the moral standards of the Church remained a matter of feeling or, as in the case of Erasmus, stopped half-way. Nowhere, not even in Italy, did it lead to a clear conception, far less a conscious vindication, of a new moral ideal. For the few humanists who, like Lorenzo Valla, ridicule ascetism as unnatural folly, or like Machiavelli ignore *all* moral laws both in theory and in practice, can only be regarded as prophets of a new ethic if the same title is allowed also to Cesare Borgia, Ferrante of Naples and other "moral-free" tyrants of Renaissance Italy. The majority of the Italian humanists had no thought of any conscious opposition to the principles of the ecclesiastical ethics, even though their private life might show no trace of its influence. Many of them indeed, and not the least celebrated, as for instance the Platonicians of Florence, Leone Battista Alberti, Mantovano, Vida, Sannazaro, were convinced Catholics, and the great Florentine artists, Sandro Botticelli, Fra Bartolommeo, the Robbia brothers and Michelangelo, unconditionally subscribed to the views and piety of Savonarola. Thus the statement that Luther's ethic was nothing more than a "reflex of the mighty vitality of the Renaissance," or a skilful representation of the lay morality of his time, is only a striking proof of the remarkable fundamental ignorance still prevailing as regards both Luther, the so-called Renaissance, and the state of feeling among German laymen at the end of the Middle Ages. For Luther was never so "open to the world," and never took such joy in the things of this world, as many scholars still in all good faith assume, and this mighty vitality is not either a universal or an exclusive characteristic of the Renaissance, but a phenomenon which arises and occurs in all epochs, and therefore also in the Middle Ages, in restricted spheres, among the educated and ruling classes. So if Luther is not on any account to be recognised as original, there is nothing left but to follow the directions of some philosophical mythology and lay the responsibility for the reformer's new ethical thoughts upon the "Idea," or the spirit of the times, or the spirit of the German people, or the general will, or whatever other names are given to these unknown and invisible idols. But that would be conjuring up spirits to solve an historical problem, or interpreting historical facts by a mythological text. Let us rather leave in peace these spirits and spectres, even that universal favourite the German *Volksgeist*, and content ourselves with simply stating the fact that Luther's ideal was Luther's own discovery, though it was also up to a point the fulfilment of a longing and an endeavour which had long been in existence, but had only found the most obscure and confused expression.

From all this it is sufficiently demonstrated that the reformer, whatever remnants of the Middle Ages may cling about him, must nevertheless be designated the prophet of a new religious outlook and the creator of new moral ideals. Consider what was regarded as religion when he appeared—the worship of God in the Spirit and the worship of the Host, the reverent contemplation of the life of Christ and the ardent veneration of saints, relics and images, the purification and sanctification of thought and the most superficial fulfilment of ecclesiastical regulations, the humble abnegation of self in the service of the poor and the sick and the utterly mechanical performance of all conceivable kinds of good works, such as fasting, telling of beads, pilgrimages, almsgiving, founding of Masses, images, candles, altars, entry into an Order or a Fraternity, sale and purchase of indulgences, and countless other things Christian and heathen, lofty and base, holy and unholy, and sometimes completely unaccountable, often in the strangest combinations. Piety was bound up with so many objects, processes, places, buildings, customs, formulae, doctrines and institutions, the concepts of religion were so varied and contradictory, that the question, What is the essence of Christianity ? could at that time hardly have received any answer but the following : Christianity is everything that the Church teaches, does, demands and permits. For the most characteristic fact was that the Church suffered the most dissimilar kinds of religion to exist under its aegis ; that it required the veneration of the alleged *praeputium Christi* just as much as the veneration of Christ Himself, that it set up altars to the saints, who were often distinguished only in name from the old heathen gods, no less than to the true God, that it granted a place in the worship of the faithful to the god of Plato and Plotinus as well as to "the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." Then came Luther, and immediately, wherever he found a hearing, the picture changed. The saints fell from their thrones, the flames of Purgatory sank, the god of Plato and Plotinus became silent. Thousands of altars disappeared. The divine *service*, in the old sense of the term, ceased altogether. Sacrifices, sacrificial Masses, priests, sacraments, Church, all the external agents and intermediaries which, according to the old belief, the Divinity had need of to extend the forces of salvation to mankind, became null and void. Heaven and earth, the Here and the Beyond, were as if transformed.

But if Luther struck such relentless blows with his peasant's axe at the naïve polytheism of popular religion, the sublime polytheism of the official cultus and dogma and the naïve pantheism of Mysticism, which had also been haunting theology for so long, he did so only to give renewed light and air to religion, which threatened to stifle under the weight of its old clothes. What, then, did religion mean to him ? Not something complicated, but something quite simple ; not something dependent on external agents and intermediaries, but something altogether spiritual, personal, inward ; not a state of knowledge, but a state of feeling, a *Gesinnung*, which the individual first experiences personally as serenity of conscience. This state of feeling presupposes first the realisation that the greatest of all evil is guilt, the greatest of all good the remission of guilt, and further the knowledge, which can be gained only through the personal experience of the individual, that man only becomes free from guilt when he trusts himself unconditionally to the true God, Who in Jesus Christ reveals Himself as the merciful Father. It arises only when this trust, as a divine gift, takes possession of the soul, for it is nothing else than trust in God as the all-governing, all-merciful Father. To seek God and find Him, to fear, love and trust God above all things, to let the heart rest and hang upon God alone, that is religion, the whole of religion, to Luther. But how shall man reach Jesus Christ ? Luther answers : through the Spirit of God, through which God is ever present in the world and works to gather to Himself a people or a church. The organ through which the Spirit exerts its influence is simply the Word of God or the testimony of Christ's good deeds, which is offered to mankind in three forms : the oral Word in Christian preaching, the visible Word in Baptism and Communion, and the written Word in the Bible, so far as the Bible is Christ's advocate or speaks of Christ's good deeds. Piety is thus not only conceived as something entirely spiritual and inward, it is also considered as bound up with an agent working entirely spiritually—the Word—and the Church is regarded not only as an institution working entirely by spiritual means, but as an invisible Kingdom governed by an invisible Overlord, Christ, through the invisible agency of the Word, and standing in organic connection with the visible churches only in so far as the latter preach the Word of God and thus serve as mission-houses of the *true* Church. For that part of the true Church which exists in the visible churches, is not visible ; and that part of them that is visible does not pertain to the true Church, but comprises an institution, determined and conditioned by place, time and changing conditions, and formed by human law.

This realisation that religion is a state of feeling, which can only be awakened and nourished by an agency working through the spirit, is Luther's most fruitful discovery. For all the other discoveries which he subsequently achieved, the abolition of "world-renouncing ascetism," the destruction of the Catholic conception of the sacraments, etc., result as logical consequences from that first fundamental principle. Three of these consequences were of especial significance for the future; first, the realisation that there is only one way to the knowledge of God and community with God, and that way is Faith. This invalidates the whole traditional practice of theology, and also deprives the neo-Platonic Mysticism, which had also played so great a part in private edification, of its right to existence. Second is the realisation that there is only one manner of worshipping God, and that is faith—faith as trust in God's merciful love towards sinners, faith as the vital, reckless confidence in God's gracious guidance and providence, which causes all things to work together for man's good. This makes valueless the whole traditional divine service, with its enormous apparatus of sacrament and hierarchy. The divine service as it remains is no divine service in the technical sense, but a kind of pedagogic institution for the education and edification of the community. The third deduction is that since religion is a state of feeling which can and should express itself at any time and in any condition of life, it is a foolish illusion to believe that man must flee and withdraw himself from the world. God has rather put man into the world so that he may overcome the world *in* the world, in the position which providence has assigned him. Not the cloister, therefore, but the lay profession or calling, is the normal sphere for the testing of faith and love for one's neighbour. But naturally the faithful and honest pursuit of a calling does not in itself constitute the fulfilment of the moral ideal. It can do so only if it springs from obedience to the will of God as revealed in the natural order of society, and if the calling is regarded as a means of serving one's neighbour in self-denying love. This not only places the secular calling upon an equal footing with the vocation of the monk, a view which is occasionally found in the German mystic Johann Tauler ; it also overthrows the principle of world-renouncing asceticism and establishes a new ideal for the conduct of personal life. For even the word *Beruf*, calling, had never before been used in the sense which Luther imparted to it.

Thus, through the simple discovery that religion is a state of the heart, that, being a spiritual thing, it cannot be awakened by material means, nor can its activity be bound by material and external things, Luther becomes not only a reformer of religion, but also a reformer of ethics, for the two things, religion and morality, are to him closely interwoven. Piety implies both religious feeling and personal goodness. Faith not only appeases the conscience, but fills the soul with joy, the mother of all virtues. It engenders in men as "a living, creative thing" the immediate impulse to moral activity, and remains for ever an unresting driving force in all moral action. And by all this he had—most important of all for himself and humanity—won back the psychological attitude which the Gospel presumes and demands. This attitude is best betokened, perhaps, by the concept which originally formed the central point of his religious outlook—humility. For humility is in the first place the unreserved submission of the self to God, which arises from the knowledge that all good can be received from Him and only from Him, and which therefore renounces all desire to be something and count for something independently, and in happy trust accepts from God's hands all He sends, sweet and bitter, joy and sorrow, pain and well-being. In the second place there is inseparably connected with this new feeling of vitality, the devotion of self to others, humility in the particular sense, the readiness to serve. For precisely because, in the humble man, attention is no longer steadily concentrated upon the ego, because he is free from base care for daily bread and provision for his family, free also from the higher care for the continual perfecting of self, from ambition, envy, jealousy and vindictiveness, the sight or even the thought of the sufferings of others, of whatever kind they may be, immediately activates in him that "abounding love" of which Luther so often speaks, that is, the impulse to sacrifice himself in loving service and long-suffering. As this "affection" is not simply a reaction to a pleasantly felt sensual or intellectual stimulus outside the loving self, it turns quite spontaneously, as Luther also often observes, to the most needy and despised classes of mankind, lepers, lunatics, blind people, deaf-mutes, publicans, prostitutes, criminals and enemies of religion (Samaritans). Thus the humble become perfect in the sense of the Gospel, as perfect as God (Matthew v. 48). For God's benevolence to man is also the prototype of humility, that is, a constant devotion of self to the lowly, even those who do not earnestly seek Him. But the humble man is at the same time always conscious of the distance between himself and God. That the God who desires Good so unconditionally can nevertheless be so benevolent towards man, remains for ever an unfathomable mystery to him, which keeps the "affection" of fear and awe—both are contained in the "childlike fear" that Luther so often depicts; the word "awe" he does not know—awake in his soul, and never lets him forget that God and Good are one. The sense of the absolute value of the Good can therefore never vanish from him. It restores the tension of the will, which in impulsive movements seems to relax itself completely, and spurs it on ever anew, thus preventing that impulsive self-abandon which constitutes the specific danger of this psychological attitude—a danger which later on the theologians who had never felt quite at home in this theory, such as Melancthon and the epigones of Luther, tried to obviate by all kinds of theoretical artifices. But every truth must be accepted with the danger that lies in it. The man who thinks only of the danger which this inward attitude may have, will never reach the fructifying experience which it should make possible and which a truly fruitful activity first matures, but it will be thrown back again into the sterile egotism in which the human being becomes inwardly impoverished, and eventually unable ever to find the path to action.

In the course of successive ages the value of these principles of the Lutheran evangel has naturally been very differently judged, in accordance with the prevailing philosophical or religious point of view, and similarly very different opinions have been uttered as to the relation of Luther to the Catholic-mediaeval system. A whole series of such judgments more characteristic of the judges than of Luther, have already been introduced in our first chapter. Here we can therefore content ourselves with discussing the latest attempt of this kind, the criticism of the Lutheran Reformation by Ernst Tröltsch in *Die Kultur der Gegenwart* (2nd edition, 1909). Tröltsch maintains: "The central religious idea of Protestantism, and therefore also of Luther, is the suppression of the Catholic conception of the sacraments. This idea, and this idea alone, is the undeniably modern element in Luther's message. For in its essential features and characteristics Old Protestantism is only a transformation of the 'mediaeval idea.'" This thesis may be objected to immediately from the point of view of historical logic. Instead of starting out from Luther's positive principles, Tröltsch thrusts into the foreground an undoubtedly very important *negative* consequence of these principles, and stamps this as the central idea of Protestantism. If he had reflected upon the very obvious question how Luther came to "make a breach in the Catholic system precisely at this central point," he could not have avoided recognising that the so-called "central idea" consists in something else—namely, in the new conception of religion which has found didactic expression in the article on "justification by faith alone," that is, in the conception of "subjective religion" as a state of mind in man, and of "objective religion" as a revelation of the mind of God. From this there inevitably results the abolition of the Catholic conception of the sacraments, of the belief that salvation is a force which can be thought of in material terms, and in the bestowal of which God binds

Himself to defined material means. From the historical standpoint, too, this is the only view of the facts which can be justified. Luther first gained his new conception of grace, faith and justification between 1512 and 1516. Only afterwards, in 1520, did he attack the Catholic view of the sacraments, in his *De Captivitate Babylonica Ecclesiae.* It is perfectly true that this work made the deepest impression on his contemporaries of all his writings; but why was its effect so powerful? Because it struck the point at which the opposition between Luther and the Catholic system was most obviously apparent. But more important is the question whether Luther's conceptions of grace, faith and justification are to be regarded only as a transformation of the mediaeval idea, or, as Tröltsch expresses it elsewhere, as new solutions to the problems of mediaeval Catholicism. If one judges by the first superficial impression, this contention seems not altogether unjustified. The doctrine of justification is the central point of the Catholic system, and also of the Protestant system; in the Catholic system the concepts of grace, faith, good works play a great part, and also in the Protestant system, and so on. But it is a matter for thought that Luther has no need whatever of the concept of justification for the pure and complete expression of his religious ideas; neither in the lesser Catechism nor even in the greater Catechism does it appear once. And besides, it is no subsidiary circumstance that all these concepts have an entirely different meaning in Luther's evangel from that which they have in the Catholic system. They are wholly de-Catholicised, immaterialised, they become inward and personal things, through his new fundamental view of religion. Grace is understood by Luther not as a supernatural force or medicine which is poured into a man by means of the sacraments, and which should then somehow produce spiritual and moral effects in him, but as a state of feeling on the part of God, which is announced in the "Word of God" and is effective through the medium of the Word, just as any other announcement of feeling becomes effective through words. He understands justification not as a kind of physical miracle in which the substance of sin is suddenly driven out by the supernatural substance of grace, but as a spiritual and psychological miracle, accomplished in the human soul without any material agency, and which consists simply in the gaining of a new spiritual attitude, that of unreserved trust in the gracious spiritual attitude of God. Faith is conceived not as an external submission on the part of the human being to the external regulations in which the doctrine of the Church is presented to him, but as a *Gesinnung*, a spiritual attitude or state of feeling, which is directed not towards anything external, be it Church or doctrine, but again towards a *Gesinnung*, the spiritual attitude of God. Thus we find in every case the same concept, but with a totally different content. It is difficult to understand how anyone can see in this only a transformation of the mediaeval idea. For those who follow the logic of this world, the term " transformation " cannot have any meaning here unless by " form " is understood the essence of a thing, in Plato's sense, and not " form " in the usual meaning of the word.

But is it not justifiable at least to regard these doctrines of Luther's as new solutions to mediaeval-Catholic problems? As early as the beginning of the fourteenth century there appears in Catholic theology, as we have already mentioned several times, the endeavour to free religious thought from the fetters of antique naturalism and substantialism. Duns Scotus, by defining God strictly as Will and Person, tries to eradicate from the concept of God the traces of naturalistic pantheism, and, by regarding sin purely as a manifestation of will, to put an end also to naturalism in the theory of sin and original sin. By his doctrine of merit he shatters the old conception of religion as a matter of private law between God and man, and even attempts up to a point to spiritualise the concept of grace, by distinguishing between sacramental grace and the grace of justification. Occam and the Occamists follow faithfully in his tracks. They pursue even more keenly his criticism of these fundamental concepts of the Catholic system, and attempt also to uproot the hierarchical idea of the Church. At the same time the Mystics begin to thrust aside more and more the hierarchical and ritual apparatus of the Church for private meditation and devotion, and to create a sphere of existence for an inward and personal application of religion such as the earlier Middle Ages, at least among laymen, had never known. True as it is that all these items did not lead to the abolition but only to a disintegration of the Catholic system, it is nevertheless indisputable that in them tendencies came to light which were indications of the future, and which found full expression only in Luther's message. But does this prove that Old Protestantism is in its essential features only a new solution to the problems of mediaeval Catholicism? By no means; it proves only that even in that space of time which since Cellarius has been designated by the unfortunate name of "Middle Ages," endeavours already make themselves felt which must gradually lead to a complete collapse of the mediaeval-Catholic system. Such endeavours, and such new ideas fatal to Catholicism, make themselves noticeable at the turn of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries almost simultaneously in all spheres of cultural life, so that this generation, the generation of Boniface VIII, may well and justly be called the turn of the ages. It is at this time, in the political theories of the French publicists and in the political practice of the French monarchy, that there first appears, in opposition to the Augustinian mediaeval conception of the universal confederation of Christian humanity, the modern ideal of the sovereign national state which claims not only full autonomy, but also unlimited authority over its subjects in all spheres of material and intellectual life. At the same time Duns Scotus and Occam commence the criticism and abolition of the scholastic system, and Mysticism begins the neutralisation of the hierarchical and ritual apparatus of the Church for practical piety. No less important is the fact that the territorial and military nobility recede more and more into the background, giving place to the town-dwelling middle classes, which take the lead in all spheres, including that of intellectual life.

It is the tradition to regard all this not as something specifically mediaeval and Catholic, but as a significant symptom of the decay of mediaeval culture and the formation of a new civilisation. The Catholic Church gave allegiance to this view very early and with especial energy. It dogmatised not the "sick" theology of Duns and Occam, but the "healthy" theology of Thomas Aquinas, strictly rejected all Mysticism which strove to emancipate itself from the Church, condemned the modern idea of the State and the ideal of civilisation upon which it was based, rejected Conciliarism, Gallicanism—in short, all political, ecclesiastical, theological and religious reforming tendencies which seemed in any way to threaten the continuance of its own system; and no doubt, from its own point of view, it could act in no other way. For had the Church given way to these tendencies in one point, it would have surrendered itself to destruction. Thus, if Luther's development shows manifold traces of the influence of the Scotist-Occamist criticism of dogma and the mystical ideas of edification, this does not by any means entitle us to define his teachings as merely a new solution to mediaeval-Catholic problems. First, the criticism and the religious ideas in question themselves lack the characteristic of the specifically mediaeval and Catholic. Secondly, the very thoughts upon which Luther's whole religious conception is founded, his new ideas of man, of God, of the relation between man and God, could only be won by strenuous conflict with Occam and the Mystics. In this struggle, admittedly, Mysticism greatly facilitates his victory over Occam, and Occam greatly facilitates his victory over Mysticism.[1] But the result at which he ultimately arrives is nevertheless anything but a mere cross between Occamism and Mysticism. For, thirdly, the problem which governs the whole analysis and rejection of these systems—the question: How shall I, as an *individual*, reach the certainty of forgiveness?—is one which is not raised by either the Occamists or the Mystics, nor does it arise from their hypotheses by simply carrying further their processes of thought. Both, on the contrary, seek rather to create and maintain the particular mood and attitude of mind which Luther desires to escape. Both endeavour to accentuate this mood, this hovering between hope and fear, as much as possible, the Occamists because the pious Christian is thus more readily inclined to moral effort, the Mystics because only thus can they preserve the perfect humility which accepts with tranquillity even eternal death and eternal damnation from God's hand. And all the other varieties of Catholic piety are equally incapable of raising or dealing with Luther's problem; indeed they regard the problem, as such, as a godless and impious thing from which the truly devout must turn away in horror. Thus, to define Luther's relation to the religion of the Middle Ages, we are forced to *reverse* Tröltsch's formula and to state it thus: Luther's teaching is the solution of a new religious problem on the basis of the Occamist criticism of the Catholic system and the views on practical religion and edification formulated by late mediaeval Mysticism.

---

[1] *Cf.* p. 69 ff.

But Tröltsch does not arrive at his hypotheses by the customary historical method. His whole construction is drafted not by working forward, but by working backward. Instead of first determining the elements of the mediaeval and Lutheran "systems" and then comparing one with the other, his first endeavour is to discover the differences which exist between the civilisation of the present and *all* preceding civilisations of the Christian era. Only then does he give closer consideration to the peculiarities of the older stages of culture. This procedure is certainly a good means of bringing out strongly *certain* characteristics of the civilisation of the present. But it is only too easy to lay too great emphasis on these particular features, while others, perhaps equally important, are overlooked or, as survivals of earlier phases, stigmatised with illegitimacy, so that their importance in the whole is not sufficiently appreciated. But above all, as in all these retrospective views of history, past and present are involuntarily compared from the point of view of *contrast*, and not the point of view of development, so that the distance between their respective stages of culture becomes glaringly apparent; whilst on the other hand, in the consideration of the phases of culture of the past, the differences are involuntarily weakened and effaced, and the firm outlines blurred as much as possible, as the desired effect of contrast is thus more readily produced. Thus, midway in the course of historical consideration, the *modus procedendi* is changed. The contrasts observed are first accentuated and then equally vigorously effaced. It is self-evident that no faithful and complete picture of the ages depicted can be obtained in this way. The projections will always be necessarily somewhat oblique, the perspectives too short; the light is now too glaring, now too pale, even if the artist is at pains to work as far as possible from nature, *i.e.* from the sources. This peculiar defect of vision, inevitable in following the method described, overtakes Tröltsch just at the point where he believes the mediaeval quality of Old Protestantism to be most apparent—namely, in the judgment of the Reformation concept of authority, Reformation ethics and the Reformation view of the Church. Luther is thoroughly mediaeval, he says, in his assumption that the true religion is a matter of certain knowledge; that the contents of the Revelation can be exactly determined and must be respected by everyone—for he takes it for granted that the Revelation has universal authority. The difference is that Luther regards as the organ and embodiment of the Revelation and of authority not the Church and its teachings, but the "Word of God," the Bible alone. This is quite true. But is this concept of authority really only characteristic of the mediaeval Church and Old Protestantism? No. It is familiar even to early Christianity; the Early Christians look upon the writings of the Hebrew or the Alexandrine canon, the words of Christ, the precepts of the old Christian prophets, just as Luther looks upon the simple utterances of the Bible—as an absolute revelation, absolute truth, unconditionally binding in its authority. Thus we are here dealing not with a specifically mediaeval idea, but with an element of Christianity in general.

The element which is specifically mediaeval and Catholic, the belief in the function of the Church, as teacher, to receive and impart revelations, and the material and external character thus given to the concept of authority, is precisely what Luther suppressed ; and he did genuinely suppress it, and not merely transform it, as is still frequently maintained, by simply substituting for the teaching Church the external authority of the letter of the Bible. For in his opinion the Word of God can only become actual revelation and authority when, by God's direct influence upon the soul, it has testified itself as a Word of *God*. Whether this correction of the old doctrine of authority is adequate may indeed be disputed. But that the concept of authority itself is indispensable to Christianity, and is considered indispensable even by "Neo-Protestantism," is proved to the hilt by the most modern Protestant theology. For what are the speculations on the Idea of Christianity, and on the historical Christ as an organ of revelation and as an authority, except attempts to spiritualise the old doctrine of authority, and thus make it safe for modern thought ?

As a sociologist and student of ethics, Tröltsch lays perhaps even more weight upon the second point—the inner kinship between Lutheran and mediaeval-Catholic ethics. He contends that Luther's Christianity is still fundamentally ascetic. The reformer differs from the Middle Ages only in that he demands an asceticism practised not away from the world but *in* the world, not an outward but an inward renunciation of the world—namely, the heart's independence of the world and its joys and sorrows, manifesting itself always in the midst of the world's life. This again is undoubtedly correct. The spiritual mastery (*imperium spirituale*) over the world, which the reformer praises in such powerful tones, has indeed no connection whatever with the modern idea of culture. It means simply inward freedom and independence of the world. But it is hardly necessary to say that the striving for inward independence is not characteristic only of the Middle Ages and the reformers, but of the Christianity of all ages and lands—

in other words, that here again we have a general feature of Christianity, not a mediaeval-Catholic element in the Lutheran teaching. What was specifically mediaeval and Catholic, in this case too, Luther abolished. For here again the specifically mediaeval and Catholic element was the "materialisation of the religious idea," the supposition that man could only keep himself quite unspotted from the world by breaking off all external connection with the world, its gifts and duties, and the conviction that the superhuman mode of life of the ascetic was the short cut to salvation.

The same applies to the relation between Luther and the Catholic idea of the Church. The universal Christian element in this idea, the belief, already current among the Early Christians, that the spirit of Christ is always present in the world to lead men to faith, and thus to participation in His Kingdom, the reformer retained; but what was specifically Catholic, the conviction that the Kingdom of Christ was visibly represented in the outward hierarchical institution of the Church, he again completely rejected. But did he reject *all* the claims of the mediaeval Church in the same way, in particular the most important of them all—the claim that the Church is called upon to guide, order and rule the whole of civilised life as supreme legislator, and might, as the divinely appointed administrator of doctrine and the sacraments, keep the faithful perpetually in tutelage? It is true that in this connection, too, Luther made no radical breach with the Middle Ages. He preserved the thoroughly mediaeval institution of the popular Church. But he not only modified it but made it into something quite other than it had formerly been. First, he allotted it quite a different significance in religious life from that which it had claimed heretofore. The Church, in so far as it was an external, visible, legal institution, became henceforth not a divine foundation, but something established by human law. It was recognised as a divine instrument of salvation, not in itself, but only in so far as it proclaimed Christ. Above all, it ceased to be accepted as the sole and exclusive instrument of salvation, and must share that position with all other churches, religious institutions and associations which in any way serve to spread abroad Christ's message. For wherever Christ is proclaimed, there exists the Kingdom of Christ or the Church in the ideal sense; but it does not follow that this Kingdom is to be found also wherever the visible, legal Church exists. In connection with this, the reformer also defined the tasks of the popular Church quite differently from the mediaeval conception. Its sole function is to preach the Gospel of Christ. To order the material life of humanity is neither its duty nor its right; nor has it any reason to act as guardian of the human race, issuing laws and regulations on these matters, as if men could not settle such things alone by the help of reason. Further, the Church must restrict itself to *proclaiming* Christ—that is, it is essentially only a school and a missionary establishment for those who are not yet good Christians. Thus it is neither able nor called upon to keep true Christians, or believers who seriously desire to become true Christians, under its guidance, government and tutelage. This does away in principle with the mediaeval idea of civilisation. The Church is again limited to its nearest task—the saving of souls. This nearest task now becomes its sole function. For Judgment Day is at the door, and there are so many yet to be saved that, in the reformer's eyes, all other tasks whatever must give place to this, the most important. He does not, therefore, give a definite answer to the old problem, newly raised through his Reformation, of "Christianity and Civilisation." He only commits himself, and with an affirmative answer, on the question whether a Christian may with a clear conscience be a public official, a soldier, a prince or a merchant, and emphatically states again and again that it is impious and immoral to lend out money at high interest. That is all. But so much is certain, that he regards such a complete adaptation of Christianity to civilisation and of civilisation to Christianity as the Middle Ages had tried to bring about, by the subjection of the whole of civilised life to the dominion of the Church, as neither possible nor desirable. But the popular Church not only ceased for him to be the guide and legislator of the whole of civilised life; it also loses the right to act as the permanent guardian of the faithful. To true Christians the Church has nothing more to say. True Christians have outgrown its discipline. For this very reason true Christians are in a position to realise an ideal which the popular Church as an outward legal institution can never realise—the ideal of a Christian *community*. They can voluntarily come together in meetings, first, to edify themselves by free private worship; secondly, to educate each other in the sense of the Christian ideal by the practice of strict moral discipline; and thirdly, to carry out in common various good works of Christian love. This alone is the "true evangelical order of life." For it provides a form of religious organisation in harmony with the evangelical view that all believers in Christ are fitted and qualified, as priests, to decide for themselves on questions of religious and moral life. Thus at the moment when he reorganised the popular Church in accordance with the evangelical conception, the reformer looked forward to the foundation of an entirely new kind of religious organisation which was to exist beside the Church. He was certainly in earnest over this idea, even though in 1527, in view of the moral degradation and religious immaturity of the people, he abandoned the hope of establishing such gatherings himself, and could not approve the attempt of the Hessians to introduce them at once simultaneously with the reorganisation of the popular Church. Thus, actually, he did not simply maintain the mediaeval institution of the popular Church. Rather, in this case too, he destroyed what was mediaeval and Catholic, defined the duties of the popular Church quite differently and had in prospect the foundation of an entirely new kind of religious organisation, in which alone, through the universal priesthood of the faithful, the evangelical idea of the true Church should, as far as that was possible on earth, find embodiment. This plan, indeed, remained for the time unrealised. But it is very interesting to notice that Luther's ideas upon the practical development of religious life already centred round the two typical forms of religious organisation whose existence side by side and whose differentiated functions are as characteristic of Protestantism as the existence side by side and the differentiated functions of the social Church and monasticism are characteristic of Catholicism—the popular Church and the community. Further, the relative value of the two types was so well defined by him that there is hardly any modification of it to be made. The free community, provided it does not sink into pettiness and sectarianism, is indeed the " true evangelical order of life " ; whilst the ideal vocation and also the limitations of the popular Church could hardly be more exactly characterised than by the predicate : missionary institution and school.

Thus one may go so far as to say that it is blocking the way to an historical comprehension, not only of Luther, but also of the mediaeval-Catholic system, to assess them by the formula : " Luther's message is in its essential features only a transformation of the mediaeval idea," or " only a new solution to the problems of mediaeval Catholicism." The truth is exactly the opposite. With Luther the essential features and the problems are new, the forms are still in many respects the old forms. The old Catholic charge that Luther founded a new religion has more claim to belief. For what Catholics, especially those of the people, commonly understand by religion, is indeed no longer to be found in his teaching. First, the idea of the epiphany of God in the Mass, as a thing bound up with the use of a particular ritual and with the action of specially consecrated persons, and therefore repeatable indefinitely, is not to be found. This conception, a relic of antiquity, he discards. Secondly, he gives no place to agents of grace in the Catholic sense. For he rejects also the old Catholic notion of grace, which evolved under the influence of the Stoic metaphysics, and which represents grace as a divine force which can be imparted through the sacraments. Thirdly, he casts away the belief that man can deserve this grace, and thereby, indirectly, earn Paradise. For although he never denies that man has by nature some capacity for willing what is good, he does deny most decidedly that man by nature desires good on the whole, and only errs and fails in particular instances. In reality, he opines, precisely the reverse is the case; in particular cases we desire what is good, but on the whole our will is determined by the overwhelming natural instinct of self-love. This instinct is so much a part of our innermost being that it is never entirely extinguished even in the most pious. Those who think, therefore, that they can earn God's favour by good works, are not clear as to what "to be good" really means—absolute purity of the will; nor do they realise what God is—namely, the absolute Good; and what blessedness means—namely, to will what God wills, and to be governed by God alone. Believing this, the reformer never wearies of emphasising that in the "Popish" religion men do not know the true God. Instead of the true God they worship an idol, an image, a fictitious God, a *Potzmann* or puppet, which each one dresses up in his own clothes; and instead of the true Heaven, which ultimately consists in joy, love and trust in God and in the happy desire to do good unceasingly, and which therefore begins here on earth, they make up a sensual-supersensual state of joy in a "toy Heaven, such as we describe to children, and as the painters depict it." He himself seeks and finds the new element in his reformation "in his theology," meaning in his conception of God and in his conception of salvation or Paradise—that is, in those principles of faith which stand in the centre of every religious system. Fourthly, he denies that man can have direct intercourse with God in visions and ecstasies and can prepare himself for such experiences by asceticism or "heroic virtues," attaining through asceticism to supernatural gifts or charisms, such as the *χαρίσμα διορατικόν* or gift of prophecy, and the charism of *παρρησία πρὸς τὸν θεόν* or gift of obtaining of God supernatural phenomena, miraculous healings, etc., through prayer. This antique belief, too, which first came strongly to the fore during the monastic movement of the fourth century, and which again played so important a part with Loyola, he entirely discarded. God, he laid down again and again, now has intercourse with men only through the medium of the Word. "Immediate inspirations" no longer happen; while as to the "heroic virtues," they are not virtues at all. For they all consist, ultimately, in self-chosen works, exercises and sufferings, and turn men aside from the true service of God, which alone God demands and desires to have—namely, the divine service of faith and of loving service of his fellow-men, which any man can practise in the calling assigned him by God in the universal order of Christian love. This does not mean, however, that no signs and wonders can happen any more. Every day greater miracles occur than those signs from Heaven for which the Pharisees once looked so curiously and longingly. Through His Word, or more correctly through His Spirit, which exists in and with the Word, God is ever restoring souls to life, by awaking and constantly increasing in them. Fifthly and lastly, there is no trace of the idea that there is in the soul a part of the eternal substance of God, and that by a definite training of the body and mind it is possible to bring this particle of God, shut up as it is in the prison of the body, to union and coalescence with the undivided Godhead. This idea, derived from antique Mysticism, Luther also entirely dismisses. To him, God is in no sense Substance, but personal Will, and between God and man there is for him not, as the Mystics imagine, a natural affinity, but a natural opposition which man can never overcome, and which is continued in the sphere of morals and there, too, shows itself absolutely irreconcilable. For it proceeds fundamentally from the radical opposition between good and evil. Union with the Godhead is therefore impossible. All that is possible is a relationship as between individuals, which, like every such personal relationship, can only be founded by the "higher person," and stands or falls with the faith of the lower in the higher —that is, with trust in His love and goodness.

After this, we can well understand that Döllinger describes the reformer as the founder of a new religion.

This statement, however, was naturally intended to imply a judgment of values—namely, the verdict that Luther was no Christian, and the Reformation not, as the Protestants believe, a conscious return to the pure Christianity of ancient times, but an elevation of arrogant and licentious men, whose god was their belly, against God and Christianity. The Reformation was, indeed, a second Fall of Man, though its evil consequences are now happily almost overcome. For Protestantism is now so divided against itself that its final collapse is only a matter of time.[1] Has this judgment any foundation in fact ? If we are to regard as Christian only that piety of the average man which St. Paul attacks in the First Epistle to the Corinthians, then it must be admitted that the customary veneration of "spiritual gifts" and of charismatics by members of the Catholic Church is Early Christian. But it is just this veneration that St. Paul attacks, whilst he defines the enduring and in God's eyes decisive marks of a Christian as faith, hope and charity. The most that can be said, therefore, is that there persists in the Catholic Church a popular conception of religion which was also to be found in the primitive Christian communities, but was rejected by their leaders. Later leaders of the Catholic Church, therefore, are also unable to escape this criticism entirely. When Augustine says in his *Enchiridion* : Christian piety is faith which is active in love and has hope ; when Thomas of Aquinas declares : Christian perfection consists in love of God and one's neighbour, it is plain how seriously they too are endeavouring, by recalling the words of Christ and St. Paul, to overcome that distinction between two grades of piety, and the reverence for "spiritual gifts" and for outward holiness arising from it. The same applies to the religious ideas and frame of mind which find expression in the Catholic cult. It is not impossible that a similar frame of mind existed sporadically in the Christian communities of the first century. But neither the gathering together to hear the Word nor the gathering together to break bread was a cult in the Catholic sense, *i.e.* an act of specially consecrated persons, bound up with a definite sacred ritual, resulting in an epiphany of the Divinity. The Early Christians were indeed firmly convinced that the Lord whom they elevated was always present and at work through the Spirit in these gatherings. But they had no idea of any sacred ritual upon which His effectiveness was dependent, nor of an eucharistic sacrifice, nor of priests. Further, of the subordination of the believer to the teachings and guidance of the hierarchically constituted Church, an element characteristic of all Catholic piety, no trace whatever is to be found in the New Testament. For at that time there was no hierarchically constituted Church. The Church in which men believed was, as also with Luther, the whole body of those who know themselves bound by the Spirit of Christ to a community of life and spirit with Christ. Lastly, and most important of all, Luther won back the inward attitude to God, the world and humanity which the Gospel presupposes and requires.[1] Little as we should be justified in treating primitive Christianity and Reformation Christianity as identical, it would be equally mistaken and unhistorical to deny the fact that certain impulses and conceptions which were alive in the Early Christian leaders penetrated victoriously in Luther's Christianity. It is therefore not by chance that the Reformation began with a new realisation of the Bible, and that wherever it was afforded an opportunity, it strove to make Biblical Christianity once more an experience for humanity. This also makes it clear that the Reformation was not the end of Christianity; but if not *the* end, it was nevertheless *an* end of mediaeval-Catholic Christianity—not the beginning of a new religion, but a new phase in the evolution of the Christian religion, in which certain elements, bequeathed by antiquity to Catholic Christianity, were expurgated, and the conception of religion whose principles were represented by the leaders of primitive Christianity at last regained supremacy. The word "Reformation" expresses these historical facts in the shortest and most effective way possible. We have, therefore, no reason whatever to abandon it and replace it by the rationalistic description "improvement of the Church," which would best convey Tröltsch's view, or the old bellicose phrase "the so-called Reformation," in which the Catholic Church sums up its judgment on Luther's work.

---

[1] Wetzer-Welte, *Kirchenlexikon*, x. (2), 533.

---

[1] *Cf.* p. 268 f.

But, nevertheless, new as the problems and essential features of Luther's message are, the poet speaks truth when he sings: "His mind the battle-ground of ages twain." Middle Ages and modern times are, indeed, ceaselessly fighting for mastery within him, and like all men, even the most exceptional thinkers, he does not always succeed in escaping the power of former habits of thought, and prejudices which in principle he has long conquered. In him, therefore, as in other men, old, inherited views are often intermingled with entirely new ideas worked out by himself, and in disputes with others he, too, is naturally inclined to lay the sharpest emphasis precisely on these contestable points in his system, and thrust them into the foreground as if his life and salvation depended on them. The classic example of this is the dispute on the sacraments. But even more clearly than in his doctrine of the sacraments, perhaps, this peculiar diplopia of his brain is to be perceived in his utterances on the nature and value of marriage and his opinions on the functions and origin of the temporal power or State.

Few people have ever thought so highly of marriage and recommended marriage so fervently as Luther. He never wearies of praising it as an ordinance of God, as a school of perfect morality, as the sweetest, loveliest and most chaste mode of life. The physical intercourse of husband and wife is certainly the basis for any normal conduct of married life, but it is not the only, far less the highest, aim of matrimony. Its highest aim is the formation, besides the natural community, of a moral community of life between man and wife, founded upon the community of moral tasks, especially in the bringing-up of children, and upon the community of religious convictions. But in the midst of this outlook there arises ever and again a reflection of asceticism from which the reformer can never entirely free himself. He still cannot help seeing in the "*furor*" of the sexual impulse something impure, unholy, and indeed a manifestation of sin. In consequence he regards marriage first and foremost as a divinely ordained remedy for the tyrannical power of sensuality, through the wise use of which the restlessness of the instincts is calmed and it becomes possible for husband and wife to enter into a moral community of life.

The same applies to his remarks on the function, aim and origin of the temporal authority. People still sometimes talk of Luther's "conception" or even Luther's "doctrine" of State and society. But it would be well to renounce this formulation from the beginning. For it awakens entirely false expectations. The reformer knows neither the terms "State" and "society" nor the things they signify. For at that time, in Central and Northern Germany, there was no State, no society, in the modern sense of these words; there was only a large number of political formations which all, however, offer a very incomplete picture of the State. It is not surprising, therefore, that the reformer, when he reflects upon the State, takes into consideration only the strongest State-forming factor in those territories—the governing authorities—and, in harmony with the state of political development of his surroundings, proceeds entirely from mediaeval hypotheses in defining the duties of the government. For him, as for the classic Middle Ages, the starting-point and presupposition of all political reflection is the idea of the universal association of Christian humanity, "Christendom" or the "universal Order of Christian love," the preservation and government of which is everywhere entrusted to the three holy orders or natural hierarchy, the *Nähramt* or producers, the *Wehramt* or military and aristocratic class, and the *Lehramt* or teaching class. The fact that his new conception of the "spiritual power," whereby this consists only in the preaching of the Word and is a right of all believers, and his equally new doctrine that the secular authorities ought in certain circumstances to reform ecclesiastical conditions by force, whereas he denies the right of the spiritual power to institute reforms in secular matters—that all this in reality involves the dissolution of that old-fashioned idea of the State, he entirely ignores. For on this point, as so often happened, he neglects to think out his thoughts to their logical end. Like the classic Middle Ages, again, he is essentially interested only in two problems of the doctrine of the State: the question of its duties and its aims, and the closely allied question of the evolution of the *Wehramt* or ruling authorities. The latter question at least he answers quite in the style of St. Augustine, maintaining that the establishment of a government was first made necessary by sin, and that the ideal Christian has fundamentally no need of a ruling authority. For "if all people were true Christians, there would be no need of king, prince, lord, sword or law; for of what use would all that be to them, when they have the Holy Ghost in their hearts, Who teaches and guides them to do no wrong to any man, to love one another, and gladly and willingly suffer injustice, though it be death itself." Accordingly, it will be understood that his views on the duties of government are in general those of the Middle Ages. The secular power ought by brisk wielding of the sword to suppress the wicked within its sphere of action, and, if its subjects are attacked from without, protect them against foreign enemies in a war of self-defence—only such warfare being permissible. The preservation of peace, within and without, is its real function. But although government first became necessary through sin, it is nevertheless an ordinance and a foundation of God. This is not only stated very definitely by Holy Scripture; it is also a thing which everyone knows, as a part of that natural right or natural law which God imprinted in man's heart at the Creation, and which therefore may also be called a divine right and divine law. This natural right is the sum of those moral demands whose validity is admitted without argument by every man, because "his soul is created and formed after them." It includes all the requirements which were further impressed upon men by the Ten Commandments, and it sanctions as divinely ordained all the institutions which the Commandments protect, such as marriage, the family and also the government. For government "belongs to the estate of fatherhood"; it may therefore claim, by virtue of natural law, the same rights as parents; it may, by virtue of natural law, exact from its subjects respect, tax and toll, service of any kind, and obedience, even to the sacrifice of life, and proceed with the point of the sword against thieves, burglars, murderers and rebels. But the concept of natural law reaches still further. In Luther's eyes it legitimates the whole social organisation of the Reformation period, based as it is on agrarianism and "estates," as a divine institution, and stamps every attempt to overthrow this organisation as criminal—a view fraught with most important consequences for the future of Lutheranism, but in itself quite an ancient view. The concept of natural right is a legacy of Greek philosophy, the placing of natural law on the same plane as the Ten Commandments is already familiar to Old Catholic theologians, and the idea of basing the whole legal and social order upon natural law is current in the Middle Ages.

Luther's political and social views are, therefore, in very essential points, extremely ancient, mediaeval, unmodern. But even here we see that his mind is the battle-ground of two ages. Even here he succeeds in breaking through the mediaeval circle of ideas at the decisive points. To the classic Middle Ages the holder of the temporal power is no more than the bailiff of the Church, and secular law is law only in so far as it does not clash with ecclesiastical law and is not objected to by the Church. Against this conception, certainly, there arises among the French publicists in the age of Boniface VIII the idea of the sovereign national State. But Luther is the first to succeed in destroying the *religious* roots of the old theory, by abrogating the dogma of the

Church's divine function as supreme ruler of the world and of the religious authority of ecclesiastical law. It is by Luther that the sovereignty of the secular power is first placed beyond doubt from the religious point of view, and every attempt of the Church to set standards or enumerate laws for political or social life is branded as irreligious. But he not only emancipates the secular power from the guardianship of the Church; he also destroys the principle made current by Wyclif, Hus and their followers, of the legislative authority of the Bible for political and social life, and thus frees the temporal government and temporal law from subjection to the letter of the Bible, by declaring that the legal prescriptions of the Bible are not now binding upon Christians, but are only of value as examples of reasonable legislation. At the same time he pleads with all his energy for an extension of the State's activities—a move towards the modern conception of the State. Though he holds the primary function of government to be the preservation of peace within and without, he also demands that the authorities should provide for the education of their subjects by setting up schools and libraries and by some measure of compulsory schooling, uphold morality and respectability in its dominions by strict police action against idleness, mendicancy, drunkenness and luxury in dress, prevent all malpractices in trade and commerce by severe laws against usury and trading corporations, protect widows, orphans and the poor with advice and active help, and in general concern itself with the material welfare of the people, for it is also a duty of government to teach every man how to rule his house and land and to gain money and goods. In the ideal community he thus envisages the State as a civilising agency. This ideal, admittedly, is not entirely new. It is already expressed in the policy of the Free Cities in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and from the fifteenth century onwards exerts an influence also on the policy of the territorial princes. But it is Luther who first conceives and describes the "paternal" vocation of the State on such definite and extensive lines. It is he who first introduces into political thought the so-called patriarchal theory, by which the ruling power is regarded as a development of paternal authority; he who first establishes the idea that the prince is the father of his country and should rule it as such, and thus clears the way for a new conception of the State and the life of the State. This, indeed, is not identical with the modern conception, but it certainly prepares the ground for the modern *Kulturstaat*, in the Lutheran territories at least.

Can we include also among these ideas which look beyond the Middle Ages, the reformer's views upon the relation of the secular power to religion and public religious practice? This question has lately met with much discussion, and it has received widely varying answers, according as to whether the young or the old Luther was principally taken into consideration. For the young and the old Luther differ somewhat in their opinions on this matter. The reformer indeed adheres all his life to the principle that the State has no right to decide questions of faith, and to the conviction that a man's thoughts are his own. From this it follows that the old heresy law of the Middle Ages, which on occasion makes even a man's private beliefs the object of criminal proceedings by the Church, comes to an end. But does he always draw the same conclusions from these primary reflections? Let us first remember that the existing law recognised besides heresy another crime against religion—public blasphemy. This offence was everywhere regarded as a grave crime, which it was the duty of the government to punish. The German Imperial Laws of 1495, 1512, 1530 and 1532 therefore, in agreement with the Roman Law, provided for corporal and capital punishment, at least in cases of repeated offences, "according to the form and circumstances of the person and the blasphemy." Does Luther ever utter a different judgment? As far as we know he does not. Only as to the question of what is to be regarded as blasphemy, he is apparently at first not entirely certain.[1] Not until 1530 does he feel himself called upon to meditate seriously on the question, and he then arrives at the conclusion: blasphemy is any public teaching or insult directed against a public article of faith, that is, against an article of the apostolic confession.[1] If anyone therefore teaches publicly, for instance, that Christ was not God but an ordinary man, that He did not atone for our sins but that each man must atone for himself, that there is no resurrection of the dead, no eternal life and no Hell, the authorities must not tolerate such a man, but shall punish him with banishment. By this no one is compelled to believe, for in his own mind everyone may think as he pleases; but public teaching and blaspheming against the "Common Articles of Christianity" is forbidden.

---

[1] *Correspondence* (ed. Enders), v., 117.

This shows clearly enough that the reformer had no thought of *unlimited* freedom of religion and teaching. That such a thing was even possible was an idea entirely strange to the whole thought of that age. There still remains, however, quite a large field of action for teaching, and for blaspheming too. Does the reformer consider unlimited freedom of teaching within this field as permissible and desirable? At first, yes. "There must be sects," he writes in the summer of 1524 with reference to Münzer and his associates.[2] "Opinions must be let burst forth and strike one another. If some are led astray in consequence, well, such is the true course of war. Where there is dispute and battle, some must fall and be wounded." This limited freedom, however, is subject to one further restriction. Rebellion must not be preached in any circumstances. When this happens, the authorities must take a hand at once, and simply "forbid the land" to such preachers, be they Münzer's followers or Luther's own. But under the impression of the great misfortune which Karlstadt, Münzer and their fellows brought about by their secret "playing with Church matters, when no one had authorised them to do so" he later on changes his judgment on this point. "From contentious preaching," he writes in 1530,[3] "arises not only sectarianism, but also disorder, hatred and envy in temporal things." Therefore, should Papists and Lutherans anywhere write and preach publicly against one another, and the Lutherans perceive that they are not listened to with favour, they should withdraw and hold their peace. But if neither party will or can for conscience' sake give way, then the government must take the matter in hand and hear the disputants. Whichever party cannot prove its point of view from Holy Scripture shall simply be commanded to keep silence. Even more intolerable, however, than such public discord in teaching is the underground activity of secret preachers. Whoever teaches in secret, when it is not his duty or his office, has certainly rebellion or worse things in mind. Such a man should not be suffered, though he were the angel Gabriel himself, but should be ordered to the right master, whose name is Hans the hangman. This rule applies even to Lutheran preachers who presume to preach and teach secretly in a Catholic or heretical parson's community without that parson's will and knowledge. At whom are these hard words directed? First and foremost, at the Baptist apostles, who taught both publicly and privately that no government should be tolerated, that no Christian could be a public official, that men must hold no property, leave their wives and children and have all things in common.[1] But were these charges against the Baptist movement quite justified? Were there not amongst its members many quiet, peaceful, submissive folk who certainly cherished no revolutionary tendencies or intentions? There were indeed; but many of them, however, were not so harmlessly inclined, but of a highly subversive disposition. That the existing form of government was an irreligious institution had been since Hubmaier's death the prevailing opinion even of the moderate members who had no idea of drawing swords in the matter. Communistic ideas were also current in all the communities of the "Children of God," and the conviction that a Baptist could without ceremony dissolve his marriage with a "heathen" and abandon his children, in order to marry a "sister." The man who went furthest in all these points was the book-pedlar Hänsel Hutt of Bibra, the most fanatical and bloodthirsty of all the apostles of Anabaptism, and it was this wild Apocalyptic who obtained the greatest following in the Frankish and Thuringian dominions of the house of Saxony. It is thus no matter for surprise that the Wittenberg theologians in October 1531, in a memorandum on the question whether the authorities should punish the Anabaptists with the sword, answered in the affirmative, and that Luther added his "placet" with the characteristic explanation: "Though it is a terrible thing to punish them with the sword, it is yet more terrible that they should seek to condemn the office of the Word and suppress the true doctrine, and besides that to destroy the *regna mundi* (the temporal authority)."[1] He gives a similar judgment in a statement of October 20, 1534,[2] during the time of the terrible disturbances in Münster, and again in a memorandum to the Landgrave of Hesse of June 5, 1536.[3] In this he declares that the Landgrave ought to punish the Baptists with the sword, if only because they have broken their oath and crept back into his land to mislead the people. Yet mercy may always be shown in the matter of punishment, according to the particular circumstances. He briefly summarises his views on the question once more in a conversation of September 1540[4]: "Those Baptists who are rebellious against the authorities, the Elector punishes with death by virtue of the law. The others who hold fanatical opinions are for the most part banished." Thus, in matters of the freedom of teaching he has undoubtedly abandoned his earlier standpoint. Until 1525 he most energetically advocates a limited freedom of teaching. Later he will hear nothing of any such freedom. Until 1525 he pleads for banishment alone, even in the case of notorious agitators such as Münzer. Later he regards the death penalty as justified in such cases. What his earlier views were upon insults to God, it is not clear. In later years, however, like Melancthon, he regards blasphemy—*i.e.* any public teaching or offence against the articles of the apostolic confession of faith—as a capital crime,[1] in agreement with the existing law. Certainly a very important change has taken place in his outlook. But can it be maintained on this account that in his old age he goes back to the old heresy laws? No! He does not recognise or desire any Inquisition, any *ecclesiastical* proceedings for heresy; he recognises only a *secular* criminal action for disturbance of the peace of the Church by dissident teaching, for seditious agitation against the existing organisation of the State, and for public blasphemy; and he considers the death penalty necessary only in those cases in which the prevailing law also requires it—sedition and public blasphemy. Private faith, however, still remains free. What a man believes in his own mind shall never be made the object of legal proceedings. If these principles, and the practice of the Lutheran authorities, which was based on them, is compared with the principles and practice of the Papal Inquisition in Italy from 1542 onwards, the distinction between Lutheranism and Catholicism as regards freedom of teaching and thought will be no more in doubt.

---

[1] *Werke*, xxxi. (*i.*), p. 208.

[2] *Ibid.*, xv., pp. 218 ff.

[3] *Ibid.* xxxi. (*i.*), p. 209.

---

[1] *Werke*, xxxi., p. 208.

---

[1] *Corpus Reformatorum*, iv., p. 740.
[2] *Letters* (ed. De Wette), vi., p. 151.
[3] *Correspondence* (ed. Enders), x., p. 346.
[4] *Table Talk* (Mathesius), No. 378.

The reformer takes up the same attitude towards the question of freedom of worship as towards freedom of teaching. In his earlier years he does not study this question at all; in answering it later he always proceeds from the three principles which are axiomatic to him: the public practice of religion is a part of municipal law, of the public legal organisation. The preaching of more than one doctrine inevitably leads to disorder. The true religion is known, and may alone claim public sanction. From this he concludes that the suppression of the public Catholic cult is a duty of the authorities, whereas the suppression of evangelical preaching is unjustifiable tyranny. Therefore he not only approves but demands the prohibition of the Catholic cult, he believes indeed that it would not be a wrongful compulsion of faith for the authorities to drive gross blasphemers to the evangelical services and force them to learn the Catechism by heart, that they may at least learn "economy," *i.e.* learn how they should conduct themselves as citizens and heads of families. For the popular Church is not only a missionary institution for the Kingdom of Christ, but also an institution for public education in civic morality and respectability, and on this account alone, apart from other reasons, it is entitled to claim from the authorities not only protection but material aid.

---

[1] *Correspondence* (ed. Enders), viii., p. 163.

The freedom of *private* religious practice, however, remains untouched by all this. "In their own houses, even the infidels may serve and worship whom they will and as many gods as they will." If it pleases the monks therefore to carry on their blasphemies behind closed doors, they shall not be prevented any more than the Jews in their synagogues. But what if Catholic princes pay the Protestants in their own coin, and suppress the free spreading of the new evangel? Then they are undoubtedly tyrants and public rebels against God's Word. But shall their subjects treat them as tyrants, revolt and conspire against them and put an end to their rule? By no means. If they will not allow evangelical preaching, they may suppress it at their own risk and responsibility. But they must then at least grant the Protestants freedom of departure from their territories. Only once did the reformer abandon this standpoint, to which in general he adhered so firmly, and admit the right, not of evangelical subjects, but of evangelical princes, to draw swords against those who defend false teaching and false worship and seek to force others to conform.

But does it not follow from all this that the temporal power is competent by right to decide questions of faith and to regulate public religious practice within its territories? Not at all! The authorities have only duties towards religion, not rights. To Luther's view, they stand in a very similar relation to the religious cult as the modern State to the cultivation of learning, according to the modern conception. Just as it is generally demanded to-day that the State should protect science and scholarship, and support them with rich endowments, though the State is denied any right to prescribe to the servants of knowledge their methods or the results they are to arrive at, so Luther regards the relation of the State to religion as a relation of *pietas*, from which the State authority derives duties, but no rights of any kind. It is the duty of the Emperor and the princes, by calling a General Council, to remedy the wretched state of the Church.[1] It is the duty of the territorial lords to institute Church visitations, to suppress Catholic worship and make the path clear for the Word of God by summoning evangelical preachers. But even the most loyal fulfilment of this duty never confers on the government a right to rule the Church or settle questions of faith. Nothing could be more false, therefore, than the idea that the subordination of the Church to the temporal prince is the form of ecclesiastical constitution most in agreement with Luther's ideals. On the contrary, one may say that the subordination of the Church to the temporal prince, in so far as it is a real subordination, is in direct contradiction to Luther's basic conception of the Church. Nor can it from the historical point of view be brought into immediate connection with the Reformation. For it is not a product of Reformation thought, but, as is most typically shown by the development of the Church of England, a product of late mediaeval constitutional law, fertilised by the ideas of old Germanic Church separatism. This, of course, has no bearing upon its value as regards the present day ; for the question how a system of law evolved is as indifferent in the determination of its value as the question whether its originator was ugly or handsome. But the modern ideal, based upon natural right, of the autonomous community of Church tax-payers, can no more be regarded as a legitimate development of Lutheran principles than the subordination of Church to State. Certainly, in the first years of the Evangelical movement, the reformer declares often enough that any Christian assembly or community is able and entitled to judge all matters of doctrine and to institute and dismiss its teachers or preachers, and that every Christian has the right to correct the preacher, modestly and discreetly, should he err; but on what does he found this authority? Naturally not on the mere outward membership of a Church congregation, but on membership of the ideal community of the faithful. And why? Because this authority naturally presumes the *ability* to judge all matters of doctrine, and this ability is of course possessed only by those on whom God has bestowed faith, and thereby opened their understanding to all His promises and commands. It follows that all his utterances upon the congregation, from the years 1520 to 1523, must be judged in the light of his observations on the "gathering" or community of the years 1525 to 1527, which we have already discussed. Only here does the reformer finally dispose of the difficult problem of finding an organisation to fit his religious ideal without destroying and dissolving the popular Church. Only here does the goal towards which he has ever been striving, urged on by an obscure force, appear clearly in the light of day. Only here does it first become plain that the ideal which he has in view is not the autonomous *congregation*, but the autonomous community of true believers. It is obvious that the pursuance of this ideal may perhaps lead to the autonomous congregation of the Independents, but never to the modern "natural right" theory of the congregation.

---

[1] *Address to the Nobility*, 1520.

Thus do old, traditional ideas and states of mind mingle and interpenetrate in the reformer's mind with others entirely new and original, thoughts completely mediaeval with others undeniably modern. It is therefore not easy to characterise him as a thinker. A student considering him from the standpoint of modern culture will naturally be particularly struck by the Old Frankish and mediaeval elements in his composition and will thus be in danger of overlooking the unquestionably modern elements. One who approaches him from the side of the Middle Ages will on the other hand be most strongly impressed by the undeniably modern aspects, so that he is tempted to overlook the mediaeval aspects and depict Luther as a modern type.

In reality he is neither; neither a mediaeval type—for he burst the bronze ring of the mediaeval conception of life at the very point where it had hitherto bound most strongly even the strongest spirits—nor a modern type—for he kept many ideas which were genuinely mediaeval. Nor can he well be represented as a so-called transition type. First, because the transition with which his name is connected was no mere transition, but a revolution striking at the very foundation of the existing system of civilisation, through which historical life was guided into entirely new channels. Secondly, because this revolution did not accomplish itself in him automatically, nor did he simply experience it like an outward event; it was he himself who accomplished it and made it an event to humanity. Thus, as a thinker, he is not a type. He is a man apart, who does not quite belong to any age, and is therefore a genius in the classical sense of the word—that is, a man who as a productive force exercised the most powerful influence upon the contemporary world and posterity, an influence "which is still at work to-day." For a complete knowledge of him, therefore, we must not content ourselves with discovering the forces which can be proved to have affected the formation of his character and convictions; we must also seek to grasp all the influences which proceeded from him and are still proceeding from him. Effects which belong to the future cannot, however, be matters of knowledge, and so this task can never be completely accomplished. For, like psychological analysis, it too ever brings the student face to face with something absolutely unknowable, which does not admit of historical observation. This unknowable thing is in both cases, ultimately, the mysterious hidden spring of personality. From this hidden spring flow the most powerful and individual manifestations of force, which continue to emanate from the genius even after the death of his earthly self, and enable him, by the mere echo of his words and actions, to exercise the influence of a living man.

But this does not completely define for our case the limits of historical knowledge. Formerly it was, as a rule, considered sufficient to represent Luther as the founder of

Lutheranism. To-day everyone knows that Lutheranism was by no means the sole result of the historical movement which the Reformation called forth. To estimate even roughly his full influence on his contemporaries and posterity, we must at least study, besides Lutheranism, all the Churches and denominations which owe their existence to this movement—the Reformed Church, the English national Church, the Schwenckfeld community, the Independents, and also the associations of the Baptists and Quakers. But the relation of the reformer to all these Churches and denominations is very similar to the relation of St. Augustine to the Catholic Church of the Middle Ages. Just as the Catholic Church never tolerated and recognised the whole teaching of Augustine, so not one of those Churches and communities, even Lutheranism itself, has accepted and handed on the whole Christianity of Luther, unadulterated and unabridged. In all of them, even Lutheranism, Luther's mind has entered into a union with other minds, and has exercised an influence only in union with them. In cases where these other minds were of an entirely different kind, Luther's share in the spiritual possessions of the communities concerned can be determined with a fair measure of certainty. Where, on the other hand, they were of an allied nature, as in the case of Lutheranism and the Reformed Church, historical analysis fails, and in consequence the deliberations of scholars upon the evolution of such communities will never produce a result which will be universally accepted.

But Luther's influence—and here, too, he resembles Augustine—was never confined to the strictly religious sphere. It stretched far beyond those limits. How far it extended in individual cases is often very difficult to determine, and for whole provinces of civilisation, as for instance the development of the German language, is still far from being even approximately determined. For many problems in the history of modern civilisation have hardly yet been touched, and many have not even been clearly recognised as problems. What is yet worse is that in this case, too, the whole influence of the genius has never been completely observed. How many people heard Luther's sermons and lectures, read his works, leaned upon his courage and his trust in God, and how few have left any certain record of his effect upon them! How many having dealings with him personally and in the care of souls, received ineradicable impressions from him without by a single word betraying to after ages what they owed him! How many unconsciously gained from him new ideas and the incentive to new actions which apparently left no trace at all in their inward life, but which began to germinate secretly in the deepest depth of their soul and then at last stepped over the threshold of consciousness in the form of new realisations and pregnant resolves, without their being rightly aware of the connection! It is certain that this was the case with Zwingli, who, nevertheless, being decidedly a man of reason, possessed in a high degree the faculty for distinguishing what he had worked out for himself from that which he had received from others. How easy then must this self-deception have been to heads which were not clear, such as Thomas Münzer and Karlstadt—men who had not true knowledge of themselves, but were yet possessed of a burning ambition to play a part of their own, to "be something"!

Notwithstanding all this, we must venture an attempt to depict Luther's direct and indirect influence upon the civilisation of his time. For the difficulty of a task does not exempt from the duty of performing it. Errors and misapprehensions will indeed be unavoidable, and in place of a complete solution it will be often necessary to content ourselves with mere indications or even a mere definition of the problems to be considered. But the fear of error, which would seem to forbid in advance any such attempt, is here as in other cases counterbalanced by the conviction that errors have in history the mission to serve as heralds of truth; and the painful sense of insecurity which accompanies every step upon an unmade or ill-made road is compensated by the hope that by such uncertain operations of dilettanti, the real experts and masters will be encouraged at last to take this task in hand.

CHAPTER VI

DIRECT AND INDIRECT INFLUENCE UPON THE CIVILISATION OF THE AGE

On October 26, 1516, Luther writes to his friend Johann Lang: "I am preacher at the monastery, I have to give the usual reading at table every day, every day I am called on to give sermons at the parish church; I am director of studies at the monastery and District Vicar over eleven monasteries; I have to manage the fish-pond at Leitzkau and conduct the suit about the Herzberg Church at Torgau. Besides this I have to lecture on St. Paul, prepare my commentary on the Psalms for publication, and write letters upon letters. I seldom have time to perform the Hours as the rules require or to read Mass. You see what an idle time I am having." Indeed, he has even then no time to be tired. He must be for ever thinking, speaking, advising and writing. But he does not wish it otherwise; he is well satisfied with his lot. He is never assailed by the longing to leave his quiet corner, from which nevertheless he already observes so attentively the life and happenings beyond the cloister walls, to join in the fight and carry out tasks with which as preacher, professor and spiritual pastor he has no immediate concern. All his utterances of this time breathe rather the content of a man who has at last attained inward peace and found the position which is congenial to his nature. At the age of 33 he is driven out into the world by care for the spiritual welfare of the flock entrusted to him; and the world never lets him go again, but drags him out of his corner again and again until at last it has gradually torn the monk's cowl from him and he stands before it in an apparently quite different form. But he still remains what he has ever been with his whole soul—preacher, professor and pastor. No one need tell him what to do in these capacities; he himself knows it better than anyone, and continues to do it on his own initiative until the end of his life. Thus at all times he unweariedly offers the ever-growing community of the evangelically inclined whatever it most needs at that moment for its inward advancement. The translation of the Bible (1522–34), the German Church Postil (1522), the German Prayer Book (1522), the first Protestant Hymn Book (1534), the many expositions of the Ten Commandments, the Creed and the Lord's Prayer from the years 1517 to 1535—these are the best known of the works intended for this purpose. Likewise he is always ready to answer all conceivable questions of conscience which force themselves upon him, or are proposed to him by others. But he treats these always as questions of conscience. He never thinks of founding new legal dispositions or creating new civic laws, as Calvin later does, or in any way interfering in purely political matters. Equally on his own initiative, for the most part, does he perform all the work of enlightenment and of war, tasks both learned and popular in nature, which the progress of the evangelical movement brought with it. The work of warfare, indeed, often seems to him a "hateful business." But "if danger to God's truth or troubles of conscience are suggested to him," as Butzer acutely says, "he comes running of his own accord"; and having once drawn the sword he does not return it to the scabbard until he is convinced that the enemy is felled to the ground.

But he was not only a preacher, a teacher of the Scriptures and a minister of souls; he was also a reformer, and as a reformer was obliged to fulfil a great number of difficult tasks of organisation. If the task indicated to him was of this kind, did he still "come running of his own accord," or did he then require to be "led and driven"? If the questions to be dealt with were such as concerned him immediately as preacher, religious teacher and pastor, questions in fact which involved "danger to God's truth and troubles of conscience," then he would either set about the reform vigorously himself or try by all means to urge on the persons and authorities whose office and duty it was to accomplish it. Among these questions were, for instance, the reform of the care of souls and of the office of preacher, the organisation of schools, the abrogation of compulsory confession, fasting and attendance of Mass, the abolition of the canon law, the suppression of mendicancy and prostitution, and the new regulation of the administration of charity. He took a different line, however, in the case of questions which seemed to refer only to the external organisation of the ecclesiastical community and its life. These he did not meet half-way, but waited for them to impose themselves upon him in their own good time. Even when they had drawn very near, he did not as a rule hasten to dispose of them, or else he contented himself with giving a temporary and provisional solution. This is partly due to the fact that he had no ambition whatever to be first in such things and to be the recognised authority for the whole world; and partly to the fact that he had not such easy and simple solutions to his hand as, for instance, Calvin. When a question of this kind was presented to Calvin, he simply opened his Bible and sought to ascertain what God had commanded in His law. To Luther that was by no means the only possible way of coming to a clear decision. For to him the Bible was not a book of divine laws for matters arising in the external life of Christian communities. The law of Moses, in his opinion, has nothing whatever to do with the Christian as a Christian. It is to the Jews what the *Sachsenspiegel* is to the Saxons: the national law-book of that people. Thus, like Roman law, it is of interest to the people of to-day only as an example of good legislation. Even the Ten Commandments are not binding on Christians because they are in the Bible, but because their substance is identical with that natural law which God has written in all men's hearts. And what applies to the law of Moses applies also to the material organisation of the Early Christian communities. They do not constitute an absolute and eternal standard, but only an instructive example of how such questions of Christian common life can be treated. In short, there is and can be no such thing as divine law. All such questions touching the external organisation of ecclesiastical life are therefore, like other legal questions, to be settled by the law of the land or by reason—that is, they are secular matters which do not directly concern the clergy in their spiritual capacity. Nothing lay further from the reformer's mind than to set up a kind of bibliocracy in Wittenberg and Electoral Saxony, as Calvin later attempted in Geneva, and thus to place the Church on a completely new foundation. Any mediaeval regulations and institutions that were not patently contrary to the Gospel, and which were still more or less appropriate to their purpose, might to his way of thinking remain as they were. For this reason he had, as may be understood, no inclination to hurry over such external reforms. When God's Word was preached pure and unadulterated and an end was made of that compulsion in matters of conscience which was such an intolerable part of the old system, then, he thought, the time would have arrived for the establishment of a true evangelical organisation. For then the many, many people who still clung fearfully to the external forms of the false worship could, by the preaching of the Gospel, be brought so far in the knowledge and practice of the new worship that they would not be distressed if so many things to which they had been accustomed since their youth were designated as misuses and abrogated.

Thus the question whether the reformer possessed organising capacity must be answered in the light of the fact that he never desired to be an organiser in the same way as was Calvin later, because, owing to his entirely different attitude towards the Bible, he did not consider a complete reconstruction of the Church necessary, but only an adaptation; and in this adaptation his ruling idea was, not to revive as far as possible the institutions of primitive Christianity, but first, the religious consideration: Which of the existing ecclesiastical institutions and customs can one accept without sin or anxiety of conscience? and, secondly, the point of view of the spiritual pastor: Which of these man-made institutions must be endured a little longer for the sake of the weak in faith? But it is not to be denied that he took a far less lively interest than Calvin in reform questions of this kind. For instance, in matters connected with the ceremonial arrangement of the divine service, he expressed himself always with the same extreme lack of invention as the leaders of primitive Christianity who emerged, as it were, from Judaism. His highly "heretical" method in these things is in accordance with this attitude. Just as the old Christians preserved not only the general tenor of the synagogal service but all the Jewish prayers, liturgical formulae and usages which were more or less reconcilable with their conceptions, so Luther simply crossed out all the ceremonies and formulae in the Mass Liturgy which were particularly offensive to the evangelically minded, and the new evangelical Mass was ready. In the ceremony of baptism he left practically everything unchanged at first, lest weak consciences should complain that he was introducing a new baptism and meant to imply that those baptised in the old way were not really baptised at all; and even in the translating of the Liturgy he proceeded in such a leisurely way that Thomas Münzer and other liturgical zealots were years ahead of him. It is, therefore, not to be marvelled at that to the Calvinists the Lutheran baptism and the evangelical Mass seemed hardly less idolatrous than the "Popish Baal-worship." For externally they were indeed in part thoroughly Catholic. The liturgical chant, the choice of the lessons and the custom of intoning them, the liturgical gestures and garments of the priest, which on Luther's advice continued to be used—all this was wholly Catholic. The equipment of the Lutheran temples seemed also wholly Catholic—the altars, the crucifixes, the candlesticks, the pictures and statues of saints, the confessionals and organs were as a rule the same as in the Catholic days. Indeed in a few places, Leipzig for instance, the Protestants continued every Sunday to ring the old Catholic elevation bell (destroyed only in 1785) during the Consecration. At others, such as Nuremborg, they even thought no shame to keep the perpetual lamps burning before the altars. All such things as these, provided they were not treated as articles of faith, and "nothing was added to or taken from the Gospel," Doctor Martinus, as is shown by his humorous letter[1] to the Berlin provost Buchholzer, allowed "in God's name" to proceed as they might.

Not only in liturgical matters but also in questions of ecclesiastical law and the constitution of the Church, the reformer showed a lack of serious interest which to Calvinistic ideas was most culpable. He did, indeed, at once abolish the old Germanic conception of the priestly office, whereby this is primarily a complex of rights exercisable by the priest. Priesthood was to him exclusively *officium* or *ministerium*, not *beneficium*—a service and not a benefice. He made war ruthlessly, also, upon the grave abuses which had sprung from this materialistic concept, above all the multiplication of benefices and the practice known as "appropriation."[2] On the other hand, he allowed patronage to continue unchallenged, though it was just as much at odds with his theory of the self-determining rights of the congregation as appropriation itself. It has been thought that he did this out of consideration for the princes. For these were at all times the principal patrons. The Elector of Saxony possessed the patronage over about one-third, the Duke of Würtemberg over no fewer than five-sixths of the benefices of his country. But in the first place it cannot be proved that Luther knew this, and in the second place the princes as a rule only came into possession of so many parish churches through the dissolution of the monasteries. For in 1517, throughout the west, at least half the parishes belonged to the convents and other foundations. We might rather ascribe to the reformer the reflection that patronage was a part of the law and therefore could not simply be declared a wrong thing. However this may be, he did nothing to remedy even the undeniable severities and defects of this ancient institution, despite all the complaints over the harsh misers, niggards and skinflints who treated their incumbents as "foot-wipers for all the world." Here again we come up against that quality which we have named both his greatness and his fate. Everywhere he discovered new and fruitful thoughts. But he did not think them out to their logical end, and he neglected to deduce their practical consequences.

---

[1] *Correspondence* (ed. Enders), xii., p. 317.

[2] Appropriation or incorporation was the assimilation of parish stipends to convents, hospitals, or universities, with the result that the revenue of the parish flowed into the coffers of the institution concerned. The clerical duties of the parish were, as a rule, performed by an ill-paid "perpetual vicar." When such an institution possessed the patronage of a church, it always set out to appropriate the parish revenues in this way. Therefore it was the endeavour of the monasteries to obtain as many as possible of these privileges, so dangerous to the material maintenance of the livings and thus indirectly to the spiritual care of the communities. In the fifteenth century, in the four Upper Swabian archdeaconries of the bishopric of Constance, of 505 parish benefices and succursal chapelries whose legal position is known to us, no fewer than 275 were under the patronage of ecclesiastical institutions, 27 under that of the hospitals at Überlingen, Isny, etc., 6 under that of the University of Freiburg, and 2 under that of the University of Tübingen; this means that over 60 per cent. of the parishes in this district were in the charge of these "perpetual vicars," whose material position was as a rule worse than that of manual workers, so that they had to supplement their income by practising a trade, keeping an inn, or some other subsidiary occupation. *Cf.* Gerhard Kallen, *Die Oberschwäbischen Pfründen des Bistums Konstanz* (Stutz, *Kirchenrechtliche Abhandlungen*, No. 4546), p. 273 ff. Even greater than in Upper Swabia was the number of appropriated benefices in France and England. Oxford University still "owns" 450 livings and Cambridge University 370.

This fact in itself shows, however, that he was lacking not only in the necessary interest in such purely practical questions, but also in the necessary understanding of them. Although the ecclesiastical parish and the civil administrator unit coincided almost as seldom then as they do to-day, he never recognised the parish as an independent thing; and although in Saxony and elsewhere the beginnings of self-government by the parochial community already existed, and he himself regarded it as very desirable that each congregation should have its Elders and Deacons,[1] he never made any attempt to establish this institution and thus organise the parish congregation as an autonomous community. What is worse is that he failed to see how much already the secular authorities were out to seize the

[1] *Werke*, xlvii., pp. 66 ff.

direction of ecclesiastical affairs into their own hands, and how remarkably he himself was strengthening them in their endeavour when he gave them the casting vote in all disputes on ecclesiastical law questions, as, for instance, the rights relative to appropriated churches, and finally even called upon the Elector to reorganise ecclesiastical conditions by means of State Visitation Commissions. He was really so simple as to think that the authorities would always obediently allow the theologians to prescribe how far their power might extend, and did not perceive at all that from 1517 onwards the State really exercised government over the Church. When Melancthon and Justus Jonas proposed to set up Consistories, whose members, as officials of the prince, should have power to exercise compulsion in purely spiritual matters and to inflict not only deprivation of civil rights but also corporal and pecuniary penalties and imprisonment, he at once objected, indeed, and brought it about that the new Wittenberg Consistory was constituted as a court of judgment exclusively for marriage questions, which he always firmly held to be a secular matter ; and when the new department began, as it soon did, to give judgment again according to the canon law, which in his eyes was no law, and at the end of 1547 showed its intention to transform itself into a princely court of law, in defiance of Luther, with very extensive administrative and judicial powers in all spiritual matters, he flew into such a rage that the Elector once more ordered the innovators to desist. But with this he again allowed himself to be placated. He threatened, indeed, that he would shatter the Consistories, but he did not shatter them. He let the new department continue its existence, though he now could not but know what the lawyers composing it were aiming at. And so after his death the development he had feared came to pass. The Consistories everywhere became disciplinary police-courts for ecclesiastical matters, entertaining even purely ecclesiastical charges, such as contempt for preaching and of the agents of grace, unseemly conduct during the divine service, etc., and awarding corporal punishments and imprisonment. Finally they revived even the old Germanic legal principle that all corporal punishments were commutable by a monetary fine, and in principle allowed all ecclesiastical criminals to *buy* themselves free from the Church penalties. This brought them quite happily back to the point from which the development of the indulgence had begun.

Even worse, perhaps, was the perversion of the institution of baptism which took place under the eyes of the Consistories. Luther had preserved private baptism as a salutary institution for soothing consciences. But he had never approved of compulsory baptism. In spite of this the Consistories allowed compulsory baptism, and even the detestable old practice of mass baptism, to persist, not least because the fees for baptism formed a considerable part of the usually miserable income of the clergy. In many ways, in fact, they behaved and governed as if there had never been any such thing as a Reformation.

But can Luther be made responsible for this ? No. It never entered his head to "betray" the Church to the princes and lawyers, as strict Calvinists still maintain that he did. All that can be said is that he did not recognise in time the danger that threatened his work from this side, and did not take steps to prevent it with the necessary promptitude and energy. This was because, his whole nature being concentrated on inward thought, he took nothing *absolutely* seriously which did not directly encroach on the domain of the inner life, and, being a thorough optimist, he felt no anxious care for the future of his work and therefore did not even think of assuring it against all possible dangers that might arise ; also because he could think of no solution to these very difficult organising questions which would entirely embody his ideas. For in the treatment of these questions his brain was not inventive. As a rule he worked upon the proposals of other people. Thus, the initial suggestion regarding the Church Visitations is proved to have come not from him but from the Elector Johann Friedrich and the priest Nikolaus Hausmann ; the idea of creating the new office of Superintendent to deal with matrimonial cases and to supervise the clergy in all probability with the Saxon Privy Councillors; and the "splendid" plan of establishing a court of justice having jurisdiction over the whole country in matrimonial cases, with Melancthon, Jonas and the Saxon Estates. It is, in consequence, no injustice to maintain that although he was anything but a stiff-necked doctrinaire or a scholar ignorant of the world, and was able to perceive immediately what was unpractical in the organising plans of others, as is shown by his criticism of the Hessian Church Ordinances of 1526, he was very far from possessing the specific talent of an organiser in the same measure as Calvin or Johann Laski. He had indeed, in the person of Justus Jonas, a helper at his side who seemed able to complement him in the performance of these practical tasks just as Melancthon did in the formulation of his new religious and theological conceptions. But the talents of Jonas in this sphere went no further than the talents of Magister Philippus in the sphere of theological systematics. He was no more a creative mind than Melancthon. He possessed only the gift of adapting old arrangements to new conditions. It is thus comprehensible that the Calvinists afterwards looked down on the constitution of the Lutheran Church no less pityingly than on the Lutheran "Mass" and Lutheran dogma. Compared with the *discipline ecclésiastique* of the French Huguenot Church, that constitutional miracle of the sixteenth century, in which the *raison ordonnatrice et distributive de la France*, the *raison* of Calvin, celebrated one of its greatest triumphs, the constitution of the Lutheran Church appears indeed almost as much of a monstrosity as the constitution of the Holy Roman Empire compared with that of the Napoleonic Empire. What was most monstrous was that the Lutheran Church possessed no organ of defence against a world of enemies other than the Lutheran princes, and that the sole meagre fruit which the religious idea of the universal priesthood brought forth was the so-called domestic episcopate of the heads of families. This institution, advocated with great warmth by Luther, did indeed become a part of the life of the Lutheran people, but it could not make up for the completely inarticulate state to which the Lutheran congregations were reduced by the Consistories and pastors, and the stunting of the sense of religious community among laymen which resulted, and which is still manifesting its fateful influence in the old Lutheran districts in the lack of activity among the congregations. For the fact that the old institution of *Kirchgeschworenen* persisted here and there amounts to very little, since these sworn committees were as a rule only concerned with money matters. Really autonomous congregations did not indeed exist among the strict Calvinists or even among the American Independents of the seventeenth century. But among them the congregations at least possessed, in their synods and colleges of Elders, organs which could uphold their interests powerfully, not only against individual members but also against the temporal power. They were, therefore, far better able to ward off attacks on their existence and carry through their religious and ecclesiastical ideals than the Lutheran congregations.

It remains to be considered, however, whether the outward advantage which they thus gained entirely compensated for the disadvantages which they had to take into the bargain. For these disadvantages were very great. In the first place this system deprived the individual of practically all freedom of movement. In the second place the freedom of movement of the communities was hemmed in at every step by the new divine law. There was here no room at all for independent religious thinkers and personalities; and, what was almost more serious, external religious forms such as the keeping of the Sabbath, and problems of social usage, even of fashion, such as the difficult question whether the Christian might wear a wig and ruffles, once more obtained, in consequence—for the divine law required obedience even in the minutest minutiae—an importance in the life of the community which could certainly not be brought into harmony with the principles of the Reformation. Lutheranism, even in the days of consistorial despotism, allowed far more liberty to the individual. It set great store at times upon outward observances and orthodoxy, but it was never betrayed into such an exaggerated estimation of devout behaviour and bearing, of external morality and correctness, as the English and Dutch Puritanism. It remained always more spiritual, and therefore more flexible than its rival, which, outwardly so much more robust, was far more tightly laced in the close-fitting armour of System. Thus, in the course of the centuries, it was able to take over many of the excellent institutions of Calvinism, without surrendering its own character, because it held fast to the fundamental belief of its founder that there was no such thing as a divine ecclesiastical law, and that the development of individual members of the community was far more important than the development of the community, as such, into a corporation exhibiting in all its parts the beautiful badge of outward virtue, and suffering in its midst no slightest deviation from the law of God. Therefore, much as it might outwardly imitate Calvinism, it was never, as people now maintain, *inwardly* "Calvinised." For all these reasons, it has achieved far less for the external education of the people than Calvinism, but in return it has brought forth a much greater number of independent religious personalities, and preserved the peoples which adhere to it from that exaggerated pharisaical esteem for the outward show of Christianity and conformity to law which clings to Calvinistic piety and which still, in the form of Anglo-American "cant," exercises such a demoralising influence on the public opinion of the Christian peoples. Anyone who keeps in view these religious and moral consequences of the Calvinistic system will hardly join the majority of modern sociologists, who judge every movement by its effects on the education of the people, that is primarily by the outward conduct and industry of the groups and races influenced by it, in giving Calvinism unconditional preference over Lutheranism; or regret, with them, that the Calvinist Church did not succeed in conquering Lutheranism entirely. He will, on the contrary, regard it as a particularly fortunate chance for the development of Protestantism that Lutheranism was not defeated in the struggle, and that a considerable portion of the Protestant world was thus spared that, to the primitive Christian view, utterly ruinous perversion of religion.

But even if the deficiencies in the ecclesiastical organisation of Lutheranism are balanced by advantages which make it unjustifiable to regard it merely as the dead arm of the evangelical movement, the fact still remains that Luther did not possess the gift of creating institutions which would guarantee the consistent realisation of his ideals. This would seem to imply a judgment on the influence exercised by the reformer on the civilisation of his time. For if a man cannot accomplish entirely what he desires even within the circle of his nearest interests, he will surely accomplish nothing at all in spheres further removed from him, upon which he obtains only indirect influence. So we are involuntarily inclined to think ; but this conclusion is false. Luther shook the civilisation which he found in existence to its very foundations, although his real aim was only to "soothe consciences" and show what the true divine service, *i.e.* the right inward attitude towards God, consisted in, and he therefore, on principle, used no other weapon than the Word. For in his attempt to provide a basis for this new divine service, he touched the religious foundation of the existing civilisation and therefore, unintentionally and unconsciously, struck at all the arrangements of social life which rested upon it.

Every powerful religious movement has a tendency to create a civilisation embodying its ideas and ideals. But hardly ever has this ideal been so perfectly attained by any religion as by mediaeval Christianity. Not only custom and law, but also social and economic conditions, the organisation of teaching, of learning, of artistic activity, and even the outward appearance of the civilised landscape, all, down to the beginning of the sixteenth century, betrayed throughout the Occident the overwhelming influence of the

Church. The city then announced itself from a distance by the high uprising roofs and towers of its numerous churches and monasteries, and in flat country the extremely stately buildings of the rich old abbeys and convents struck the eye far more than the fortresses and castles, mostly very unimpressive, of the lesser nobility. The well-known view of Cologne, of the year 1532, is typical of the landscape of its time, though indeed Cologne, with its 19 parish churches, 22 greater monasteries, 11 foundations, over 100 chapels, 76 religious convents, 106 houses of Beguines and 12 hospitals, had no equal north of the Alps. But nowhere[1] was this predominance of the Church still felt as a benefit. Everywhere, in town and country, it was complained that the Church battened on the very life-blood of the people, and everywhere there was just cause for the complaint.

---

[1] Mainz in 1450, with about 7050 inhabitants, possessed 19 foundations, 8 monasteries, 7 nunneries, 3 establishments of the spiritual orders of knights; Worms in 1500, with about 7000 inhabitants, 5 foundations, 9 monasteries, 5 nunneries, 8 parish churches, 2 establishments of the spiritual orders. The total number of churches was 29, to which must be added at least 9 chapels. The number of members of the clerical estate thus amounted in both these towns to about a quarter of the population. Not quite so large was the number of churches and ecclesiastical institutions in towns which were not episcopal sees. In Frankfurt, for instance, there were in the fifteenth century only 3 foundations, 3 monasteries, 2 nunneries, 3 establishments of the spiritual orders, a dozen branches of convents situated elsewhere. Bücher estimates the number of members of the clerical estate around the year 1440 at 240 to 300 out of a population of 10,000; to these, however, must be added about 200 persons who were employed as messengers in the ecclesiastical households. Nuremberg, at Christmas 1449, numbered only 446 clerics out of 20,219 inhabitants, Zurich in 1500 out of near 10,000 inhabitants, 92 ordained clergy, 92 nuns, 30 monks, distributed among 2 parish churches, 1 ladies' foundation, 1 men's foundation, and 2 convents. Erfurt, which was considered the most populous city in Germany, but which had in 1500 hardly more than 19,000 inhabitants, possessed 2 foundations, 8 monasteries, 2 nunneries. The number of churches and ecclesiastical institutions on and east of the old Slav line appears to have been, as a rule, somewhat lower. In Leipzig, for instance, which numbered about 8,000 inhabitants in 1500, there were only 1 foundation, 1 monastery, 2 nunneries, 9 churches and chapels, 2 hospitals. On the other hand the St. Thomas' Foundation possessed about one-third of the town. Wittenberg, with under 3000 inhabitants, had in 1517 1 foundation, 2 convents, 1 parish church, 3 chapels. To the foundation alone, however, 53 clergy were attached, including 26 specially consecrated priests: *cf.* H. Boos, *Rheinische Städtekultur*, iii., 145 ff.; O. Scheel, *Luther*, i., 64 ff., 125 ff.; G. Wustmann, *Geschichte von Leipzig*, pp. 50 ff.; H. Barge, *Karlstadt*, ii., 52 ff., Falk in *Historisch-politische Blätter*, 112, 549 ff.

The Church then possessed, for instance, in Germany, about a third of the land; it took, in the form of tithes, a very high tax in kind; levied very considerable fees for all spiritual offices, for every call made upon its activity in the wide area of ecclesiastical law; it succeeded also, by systematic use of indulgences and collections, in extracting a large number of further voluntary contributions from the faithful, and in spite of all this demanded for itself and its members exemption from all State and municipal taxes. Yet this enormous burden upon the national income might have been borne in patience had not the clergy and members of convents lived, in the majority of cases, a thoroughly parasitic existence. Agricola is probably exaggerating when he puts the number of monks and nuns in Germany at 1,400,000. But when Worms, out of barely 7000 inhabitants, counted 1500 ecclesiastics, and little Gotha, with about 1000 inhabitants, 100 ecclesiastics; when in Strassburg at a single church—the Minster—137 clerics were employed, and at the Cathedral at Meissen 117, it can hardly be doubted that there were in Germany relatively as many clergy, regular and secular, as there were soldiers in 1914. These clerics were for the most part merely Mass stipendiaries, who did nothing but read Masses, and the convent dwellers belonged for the most part to the contemplative orders who knew no work other than singing and praying. And to this host of clerical idlers, whose upkeep cost the nations at least as much as the upkeep of the great armies of to-day, was added another enormous host of vagrants and beggars, whose whole existence was founded on the ecclesiastical conception that poverty was a merit and begging a respectable profession. Eberlin von Günzburg may grossly exaggerate when he states that in Germany only one person out of fifteen worked, but it is a fact that idleness had become a definite national disease, which affected wide areas and threatened to attack even wider areas. For the excessive number of Church holidays, the ever-recurring invitations to go on pilgrimages, the thousand opportunities of obtaining alms, were very strong temptations even to industrious people to drop their work and enrol themselves in the light-hearted order of vagabonds.

Then Luther took up the tale, and immediately, wherever he found a hearing, the scene changed. Mendicancy ceased to be reckoned as an honest livelihood, poverty and casual almsgiving as a merit, and the municipal police were at last given a free hand against vagrants, wandering students and able-bodied idlers. This, in the towns at least, put an end to the golden age of unlimited idleness for the work-shy tribe of wanderers. Even more rapid, and considerably more perceptible, were the effects of the economic revolution brought about by Luther's fight against the Mass and the monastic oath. Hundreds of convents disappeared, thousands of Mass stipends were confiscated, tens of thousands of priests, monks and nuns found themselves compelled to live henceforth by the work of their hands. The students and wandering scholars who had been studying in the hope of an ecclesiastical benefice, returned to civil life in such large numbers that many Latin schools became deserted, and a few universities had to be closed for several years. Erasmus complained piteously of the decline of study. But Luther realised at once the danger which here threatened the future of his work, and took vigorous steps against it as early as 1524 in his address "To the German Councillors, that they shall set up Schools." Thanks to the unwearying activity in propaganda which he in concert with Magister Philippus displayed, even the higher education soon began once more to develop very favourably in the Lutheran territories. But even Luther did not always succeed in saving, by secularisation for schools, hospitals and other branches of civilisation, the property and capital set free. Even in his immediate neighbourhood the great Hansas swooped down like vultures upon the property of the churches and convents, and sought to assure as much of it as possible to themselves, sometimes without even providing a decent refuge for the aged priests, monks and nuns who were too old to enter a new calling, as Luther demanded. But the importance to civilisation of the great secularisation which took place must not be judged by these deficiencies and encroachments. This secularisation effected everywhere a great decrease in the number of idlers, a considerable addition to the working classes, and a redistribution of property in favour of the economically productive orders; on the whole, therefore, not a reduction, but a powerful increase in the productive forces in the household of the nations.

But this economic revolution would have been impossible had not mediaeval law, in so far as it was the creation of the Church, been destroyed by Luther's reform. When he burnt the papal Bull in 1520, he flung the book of canon law into the flames with it. This symbolic action was prophetic of the future. The supremacy of the canon law was, despite the opposition of the lawyers, gradually destroyed, the legal privileges of the Church and its servants came to an end. Jurisdiction over the clergy, except where purely ecclesiastical things were in question, was transferred to the secular courts, and legislation in temporal matters became the exclusive right of the temporal power; even where the influence of the Church at first continued, as for instance in the marriage laws, at least the mediaeval law was thoroughly reformed. The conclusion of a marriage was greatly facilitated by the reduction of the mediaeval marriage bars, whereas the contraction of secret marriages, which had formerly been so easy and had caused so much mischief, became impossible. The result of these innovations was also a great secularisation, principally in favour of the temporal power. The latter at last gained full freedom of movement throughout the wide field of secular life; indeed, it soon succeeded in obtaining the direction of all purely spiritual matters, too. Thus there arose, wherever the evangelical movement was victorious, the peculiar picture of the evangelical State. This at first was apparently only distinguished from the mediaeval State by the fact that the government, as the holder of paternal power, claimed authority over *all* departments of social life. For the old division of society into estates at first remained, and religion continued to be treated in principle as a public matter, as in the Middle Ages. But how much better fitted for action and achievement this new State was! What amazing force it could display, even in unfavourable circumstances, what a mighty progress it could effect even in a small nation, if the government went about its task only tolerably well! This condition was of course not everywhere fulfilled, least of all in the birthplace of Lutheranism, the Electorate of Saxony, where, on the death of Duke Moritz, a decline set in which could never afterwards be made good. It is not there that the Lutheran State must be studied, but in the country where Lutheranism, in a bitter struggle for existence, had to create the new State from its very foundations—Sweden. This State, the State of Gustavus Adolphus, with its constitution by estates, which was so admirably adapted to the economic and social conditions of the North, and which did not permit even the rough-handed nobility to live for its private interests, but compelled all estates, according to the measure of their powers, into the service of the common weal, was the model Lutheran State. The great Northern hero-king, who had the welfare of his people and his comrades in the faith always in view as his highest aim, and therefore, as is magnificently shown by his conduct in the reconstruction of the State University and the intermediate schools, did not shirk the greatest personal sacrifices for the civilisation of his country, was the model Lutheran prince, the Lutheran counterpart of Coligny, William of Orange, Cromwell and the other great warriors and statesmen of the Reformed confession. That the composition of society by estates, and the treatment of religion as a public matter, subsequently involved many disadvantages for the further development of the States and their civilisation is undeniable. But the radical democratisation of society and the degradation of religion to a purely private affair in the modern "constitutional State" has only driven out Baal for Beelzebub. As long as the economic and social inequality among citizens becomes not less but ever greater, the theoretical equality before the law which they enjoy is a mere illusion, and the principle of "a free rein to ability" a mere hypocritical disguise for the ugly fact that in the constitutional State not the honest man but the unscrupulous rogue goes furthest. The treatment of religion as a private matter has meanwhile only accustomed people to regard the highest questions of truth as something absolutely subsidiary, and has in no degree made them inwardly more tolerant. For anyone who dares to uphold opinions which run counter to the interests of the ruling parties is, morally at least, as much persecuted, and just as effectively reduced to impotence by exclusion from all public positions, boycotting and other forms of social outlawry, as in the old days of the Inquisition. Only the forms of persecution, and the definition of heresy, have changed. Persecution itself has remained.

But the Reformation did not only create a new form of State; it also provided the initial impetus for a complete metamorphosis and re-grouping of the Western comity of States. The great political and social oppositions which had hitherto governed the relations, now amicable, now hostile, of the Western peoples, were now all thrust into the background by the one opposition—Catholic or Protestant. The religious question, which formerly had hardly played a part at all in high politics, suddenly came all-powerfully to the front. A whole series of new States arose, among them two new great powers, which owed their existence principally to the religious split—Sweden and the Netherlands; and at the same time the most remarkable political formation of the Middle Ages, that of the "lords spiritual," began to disappear. Up till 1689, indeed up till absolutely modern times, the Western peoples were still working away at the great political tasks which were set them first of all by one man, Martin Luther.

Luther himself never perceived the world-wide conditions and relationships with which his life was interwoven. In consequence he rather impeded than facilitated the solution of these political problems. One thing only, the abolition of the ecclesiastical principalities, he furthered how and where he could. He was more interested in the reform of law which had become necessary through his work. Here, for instance, in the reform of the marriage laws, he took a most energetic part. But his treatment of such legal questions was governed always not by juristic but by spiritual points of view, the soothing of consciences troubled by the old precepts, the improvement of the morality of the people, the purification of popular morality from deeply rooted vices and abuses. But, it may be asked, was a moral reform of this kind absolutely necessary? It has been concluded from the sermons of the major and minor admonitory preachers of the late Middle Ages, from the complaints of apparently well-informed individual contemporaries upon the moral depravity of large classes of the people, and from isolated facts testified by documentary evidence, which seem to cast a bad light, particularly on the lives of the clergy, that the average morality of the peoples throughout the Occident was on the eve of the Reformation in a very low state; no class, however, being morally so lost as the clergy, priests and nuns. This conclusion has lately been vigorously opposed. A few evil occurrences, it is quite rightly maintained, do not justify a condemnation of the morality of a whole estate and nation. Still less convincing are the complaints and accusations, mostly quite general, of the preachers, satirists and publicists. For these people are notoriously inclined to generalise these cases and paint an unnecessarily black picture from them. If we desire to obtain at all a reliable judgment upon the average morality of that time, we must, so far as it is possible, apply the method of moral statistics. The available material necessary for this is certainly very limited in range. For a judgment of the mode of life of the clergy, for instance, only a few late mediaeval registers of punishments awarded by the ecclesiastical courts, found among the German, French, Spanish and Italian archives, come under consideration. The number of punishments noted in these registers must be compared with the number of ecclesiastics in the judicial area concerned. This provides a completely objective view of the condition of clerical morality on the eve of the Reformation.

This statistical procedure has indeed many advantages. It is only questionable whether in our particular case it performs its function—that is, whether the material at the command of the statistician is of any statistical value. Unfortunately only a very few such registers of punishments have come down to us; and these few apply in all cases only to relatively limited areas and periods. From this alone it follows that they are of no use to the statistician. Further, we have in any case no guarantee that the ecclesiastical judges brought all ecclesiastical offenders ruthlessly to the dock. Among their contemporaries they certainly had not this reputation. They were universally regarded as rapacious and venal. Also, they could only take action against the lesser sinners who were directly under the episcopal jurisdiction. They dared not lay hands on the bishops and canons, many of whom notoriously lived "like swine," the ecclesiastics of the exempted foundations and the clergy of the many churches appropriated to exempted foundations and monasteries. This road, therefore, unfortunately cannot be followed. Indirectly, however, statistics can perhaps help us out of our embarrassment. They teach that certain statistically ascertainable phenomena, such as great numerical preponderance of women, and certain social institutions, such as customs and laws which impede marriage, always and everywhere influence public morality unfavourably. Thus, where such customs and laws exist, and such phenomena are encountered, we can always draw a sure retrospective conclusion as to the state of average morality.

If we apply this principle to the present case, we are met in all the sources for the history of the late Middle Ages by three such phenomena—the excessive number of women, the excessive number of celibate persons of both sexes, and the excessive number of able-bodied idlers; and two such customs excite our attention—celibacy and the so-called solemn oath. Celibacy and the oath are still in force in the Catholic Church. But their effect to-day is quite different from that of 400 years ago. To-day every cleric, every monk and every nun is at liberty to withdraw from the ecclesiastical estate and marry. Then, these persons were bound to their oath for their whole lives, and even if the Pope absolved them from it were, as a rule, unable to contract a legally recognised marriage. To-day, the clergy are, for the most part, overburdened with official duties of all kinds, and the religious orders, too, are all occupied in some way, with the care of souls, teaching or practical well-doing. Then, the majority of ecclesiastics had nothing to do but read Masses, and the religious mostly embraced the contemplative life. To-day, the Church everywhere makes active provision for the intellectual education and religious and moral instruction of the priests and the Orders. Then, it did little or nothing in this direction. To-day it exercises a strict control over its servants, and is often zealously supported in this by the community. Then, there was no question of any such control. Priests who kept a concubine were certainly obliged, as a rule, to pay a fine. But provided they paid this fine year by year into the episcopal treasury, they were usually allowed to continue living with their mistress undisturbed. The fine had thus in reality the character of a tax, and was even in the heyday of the Middle Ages referred to, most suitably, as the "concubine tax." In the old rich abbeys and convents, however, the bishops had as a rule no say whatever. There the monks and nuns could, in practice, do and leave undone what they chose. The consequence of all this was that most of the clergy lived in illegal matrimony, and that in the monasteries immorality often took quite grotesque forms. But many of the laymen were no better. Prostitution was everywhere recognised as a lawful trade, the prostitutes everywhere formed a recognised guild like the tailors and cobblers, and everywhere, even in the little country towns, the magistrates kept *Frauenhäuser*, *i.e.* brothels which even half-grown boys could frequent unchallenged.

Luther attacked this evil at its very root when, as early as 1520, he denounced celibacy as a "doctrine of the devil," in 1521 declared the monastic oath not binding, and vigorously demanded the closing of the municipal *Frauenhäuser*. The intended result did not of course immediately follow. The immoral priests, monks and nuns were not all immediately transformed by marriage into the highest models of conduct, and the scholars, students and journeymen who had frequented the town brothels did not all feel obliged by the closing of these institutions to lead a more regular life in future. But the number of unmarried persons of both sexes fell very rapidly, prostitution ceased to pass for an allowable profession, and marriage was immensely facilitated by the abrogation of most of the existing bars to matrimony. Thus a basis was created for an improvement in moral conditions, and this was the first requirement. The struggle against the second fundamental evil of the time—the excessive number of able-bodied idlers—had the same history. The convents and Mass stipends were abolished. In the place of casual almsgiving there arose everywhere, at least in the towns, municipal care and supervision of the poor. Further, the number of feast-days was greatly reduced and the carnivals, pilgrimages and processions were suppressed. Thus the roots of the evil were here too destroyed. The fact that the Lutheran preachers, and Luther himself, were continually complaining over the moral ruin of the time, only proves that, as their duty demanded, they were not satisfied with what had been achieved. The sober observer will, therefore, attach no more weight to these complaints than to those of the preachers of the fifteenth century over the moral conditions of that time, but will rather keep to facts which allow of a certain conclusion upon the state of average morality. Among such facts are the great decrease in celibacy, the custom of marrying young men and women in the flower of their first youth, as Luther wished, the high birth-rate in Lutheran lands, the view that a large family was a blessing, the rapid decline in illegitimate births,[1] the reduced number of able-bodied idlers, the increase in the number of working days. These facts at least do not support the contention that the Reformation ushered in an age of moral degradation, but are rather symptoms of the moral health of the Lutheran peoples.

A clear picture of the moral life of nations is, however, only to be obtained by studying the mode of life of the average man in different generations and districts; that is, in this case, by comparing the Lutheran peasant and citizen of the late sixteenth century with his Catholic grandfather or great-grandfather. We then realise at once that Luther, although he never set out so consciously and energetically as Calvin to create a new popular morality, nevertheless exerted a very powerful influence on the mode of life of the Lutheran peoples. The outward framework within which the existence of the individual is contained remains indeed the same in Lutheran countries as in Catholic times. The organisation in estates continues everywhere, and the economic activity of the individual, in town and country, still moves entirely in the traditional mediaeval forms, whose compulsion is still as a rule felt as a benefit. But the Lutheran is yet in many respects an entirely different man from his Catholic ancestor. He no longer goes in fear of Purgatory, he no longer insures his house against fire by a votive offering to St. Lawrence or by setting up an image of St. Florian, he regards his cattle, water, pasture and fields as healthy and fruitful without ecclesiastical blessings and exorcisms, and cures the sicknesses of men and beasts without sacrifices and vows to St. Apollonia, St. Blaise, St. Erasmus, St. Antony, St. Valentine and all the other saintly specialists, whose functions Luther describes so amusingly in his sermons on the Ten Commandments of 1516 and 1517; in short, he is, in spite of all the dark superstition in which he is still fettered, far more enlightened than his Catholic ancestor and neighbour. But his life has, at the same time, become far more serious and sober. Apart from Sunday he has few holidays. He knows no carnival, no pilgrimages. He can no longer count on eking out his existence with alms and meals at the monasteries in times of need. He must, willingly or unwillingly, bear always in mind the fact that the community and the corporation will come to his aid only when he can no longer help himself. But for that very reason he feels, far more than his ancestor, responsible for the economic life of himself and his family. Also, he regards the value and significance of his daily calling in quite a different way from his ancestor. The work which he has to perform day by day no longer appears to him an occupation, praiseworthy and useful indeed, yet far inferior in spiritual value to the singing and praying of the monks, but a kind of divine service, and the office which he holds in the State and the community no longer merely a privilege which he must turn to his own best advantage, but a service which he has to fulfil punctually to the best advantage of the public. He does not yet know the word "duty," but he has already a very delicate sense of what duty is. Just as strikingly as in this stern conception of work, Luther's spirit manifests itself in the patience and long-suffering with which the Lutheran people endure bad times and social and political abuses. The revolutionary humour which prevailed among the masses at the beginning of the sixteenth century has already completely vanished by the time of Luther's death. The Lutheran people show no tendency to revolt even under the worst government. As long as its faith is not attacked, it submits with patient obedience to every harshness, and in evil times comforts itself with its remarkably numerous songs of religion and consolation. This certainly involves a notable lack of initiative in all questions of public life. To compel the abolition of any public abuses by force is to the Lutheran an unpardonable crime. He looks on all such evils rather as a visitation sent by God to test his faith. If, however, he regards an improvement in conditions as possible, he always waits quietly for it to be brought about by the superior wisdom of the authorities. He is, in consequence, far less able to look after himself in the world than the disciples of Calvin, who have no use at all for such patience and docility, and where he has to compete with members of the Reformed Church he usually draws the short stick. But, on the other hand, he remains always free from the unchristian tendency to consider only the members of his own faith as the children of God, and from the illusion that it is not only the right but the duty of a Christian to hate the "enemies of God," *i.e.* the enemies of his Church and people, be they heathen or Christian, and to exterminate them as pitilessly as once the children of Israel exterminated the Canaanites. Thus, even when he must struggle fiercely for his existence, he is, not indeed in outward bearing, but in thought and feeling, always a grade more Christian than the average Calvinist. In the eyes of people who allot to religion only the task of lightening for individuals and nations the fight for existence and the adaptation of themselves to their surroundings, this is indeed no advantage. But external culture is not the highest good; the most important thing is the culture of the soul. In this the Lutheran was not behind his far more worldly-wise rival even in the seventeenth century; and the advantage which the latter had over him in outward civilisation he subsequently made good entirely.

---

[1] Even in towns of considerable size, such as Zwickau, the number of illegitimate births fell rapidly to nil after 1530: *cf.* Herzog, *Chronik von Zwickau*, i., 229 ff. Only at the end of the sixteenth century did it begin to rise again slowly, remaining moderate, however, throughout the seventeenth century. When Zwickau became a garrison town, it began to grow more rapidly, but its present height dates only from the time of the Prussian occupation of 1815.

Where religion, custom and morality are so powerfully transformed, upheaval and innovation soon assail other provinces of intellectual life. Art finds itself suddenly robbed of old ideals and tasks, and obliged to give form and expression to new ideals and sentiments. Science finds itself faced with new problems, the solution of which perhaps requires the development of new methods, and education must necessarily adapt itself to the changed conditions of intellectual life. It may be said that the very substance of the Lutheran message contained an impulse towards learning. The stress laid on the authority of the Bible made the study of the Bible and biblical languages a special duty of Protestants from the beginning, the vigorous revulsion from mediaeval piety, theology and ecclesiastical organisation of itself encouraged learned criticism of the Middle Ages, and thence the critical study of history; and the task of instructing adherents of the old system in the new faith, and of producing inwardly convinced and intellectually mature evangelical teachers and preachers, gave an impulse to the systematic exposition and comprehensive argumentation of the new conceptions. Study of the Bible and of languages was therefore not only furthered, but most powerfully furthered, by Luther, humanism was drawn into the service of religious reform, and historical research was carried a long step forward by the introduction of critical methods into history, one-sided as these admittedly were.

As in the pursuit of learning, so in the development of organised education Luther's reform was epoch-making. Even if he himself had not concerned himself with such questions at all, his work must at least have led to the setting up of a new educational ideal. But, like practically all religious reformers of modern times, he took the most lively interest in this subject. His activity as a reformer began at Wittenberg, even before the ninety-five Theses, with a reform of theological study; in 1520 he demanded a reform of the high-schools and trivial schools, giving detailed reasons, in his great reforming proclamation to the German people—the Address to the Nobility; and he later gave special attention to the elementary and intermediate schools on two occasions, in his "Address to the Councillors of all the Cities of Germany," of 1524, and in the "Sermon to be read to Children at School," of 1530. But was this lively interest accompanied by a corresponding practical gift for the reform of schools, or did Luther belong only to the useless race of pedagogic theorists? The answer to this question is contained in the three main principles of his pedagogic programme. The first is that the establishment and maintenance of schools is a duty of the secular authority; the second, that *all* children, including girls, should receive at least elementary education; the third, that the authorities have the right and duty, if necessary, to compel children to attend schools. Whether these principles are good is a question still much discussed to-day. But there can be no doubt that the whole modern system of education is based upon them, and as the State schools are a part of the foundations of modern civilisation, Luther, as the prophet of State education, must be accounted one of the ancestors of that civilisation. But the reformer not only cleared the way for the State school: he also influenced the practice of instruction very strongly in details. The primary school owes to him the two books which for centuries have been the principal school-books of German youth—the German Bible and the Lesser Catechism. The *Gymnasium*, indeed, failed to give such keen attention as he desired to mathematics and history, but the fact that it continued to lay great value on the musical education of its pupils is ultimately due to him; and, lastly, at the Universities, study of the Bible obtained through his influence an entirely different position from that which it had hitherto held.

An interest in education was in the very blood of Lutheranism. It had, on the other hand, no very close affinity with the plastic and graphic arts. Luther himself was, as we have seen, by no means lacking in all artistic sense, but his religious reform gave no impulse to the development of a new style, whether in architecture, sculpture or painting. Here the Counter-Reformation was undoubtedly much superior to Protestantism. The former employed all these arts in its service, set them ever new tasks, and stimulated them to find ever new forms for the ideas and ideals which govern the life of Catholics and the Catholic Church. In Lutheranism the artist failed entirely to find such stimulus or such attractive tasks. But does this poverty prove a lack of spiritual or intellectual force? To argue thus would mean, through a blind reverence for art, ignoring the peculiar conditions of the evolution of the religious life. "As religion develops towards spiritual maturity," Eduard von Hartmann rightly says, "it frees itself more and more from art, as being incapable of expressing its essence. The final result of this process of separation must be that the mature religion discards entirely the attractions held forth by the aesthetic sense of reality, to concentrate entirely and exclusively upon the awakening of genuinely religious sensibilities. . . . But while the purely spiritual religion with one hand takes away from the artist his specifically religious art, with the other it offers him in compensation a whole world permeated with the religious spirit"—and, we may add, at the same time sets him free from the tutelage of cult and dogma. Both Renaissance art and the art of the Counter-Reformation are still very much dependent on the Church financially, and therefore fast bound by the Church in the choice and treatment of their subjects. Though the artists themselves in many cases adopt an entirely pagan conception of life, they must all, more or less, serve the *splendor ecclesiae*. It is through the religious reform that these bonds are burst at last. Art comes of age. Gradually it conquers one department of secular life after another, to render it, illumined by art, free from the visual habits of the Middle Ages, and soon free also from those of antiquity. Landscape, light, atmosphere, the variegated daily life of humanity, all this reveals to art for the first time its whole aesthetic charm. A remarkable widening of the artistic horizon thus takes place—a widening which certainly does not mean an impoverishment but, as the name of Rembrandt alone proves, an enrichment of intellectual life. But this emancipation of the plastic and pictorial arts is only an indirect effect of the religious reformation. Directly, the new faith can infuse new vital force only into the two most spiritual of the arts—music and poetry. With these arts it shows an immediate sympathy, and indeed creates in them a new artistic style by transforming the mediaeval folk-song into the Protestant hymn, and the mediaeval folk-tune into the

Protestant chorale. Luther has a very large share in both these innovations. He was not, indeed, the first evangelical *Liederdichter*, but he created the first great models of the new poetic genre, and, by allotting the hymn a sure place in the service, stimulated hundreds of major and minor poets to follow his example. His personal part in the musical reform which soon followed the rise of the *Kirchenlied* is less important. In spite of his considerable musical endowment and education, he does not count among the innovators in the art of music. This is proved by the single fact that, notwithstanding his pronounced taste for harmony, he retained in the Liturgy the monotonous *cantus firmus*, which stood in the way of any further development of music. But, simply by making the harmonised folk-song an institution in the divine service, he unwittingly ushered in a transformation in the technique of composition which was rich in consequences. The growing desire of the congregation to take part in the singing was bound to lead gradually to the melody, which was understood by all, becoming more and more the first consideration, while the contrapuntal ingenuity, which only the schooled ear can enjoy, became more and more subsidiary. In time, therefore, the harmonic phrase thrust polyphonic counterpoint into the background; the artist sought his strength more and more in the invention of new melodies, and therefore changed more and more from a tonal technician into a tone-poet—an advance of immeasurable significance for the development of the tonal art, in which the musical circle of Luther's friends had a certain share. For Luther's principal musical helper, the Wittenberg precentor Johann Walther, did not, apparently, always content himself with adapting mediaeval compositions to new texts, but now and then tried his skill as a tone-poet; and Luther himself composed at least one melody in which, though it consists only of reminiscences of mediaeval airs, his words seem to have become pure soul and music—the powerful melody to the most powerful of his songs: *Ein' feste Burg ist unser Gott.*

But more important in life than the language of music is the language of ordinary speech. Did Luther contribute anything to the development of this high benefit of civilisation ? For the Protestant poets and grammarians of the sixteenth century this question does not arise. They hail Luther confidently not only as reformer of the Church, but also as reformer of the German language ; indeed, the originator of the standard German grammar of the late sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries, Johann Klajus of Herzberg, declares : "The translation of the Bible and the other books of Luther's I regard as the works not of a human being, but of the Holy Ghost speaking through a human being. Just as the Holy Ghost spoke through Moses and the Prophets in pure Hebrew, and through the Apostles in Greek, so does He speak good German through His chosen instrument, Luther. Without such help and guidance it would have been impossible for a man to speak German with such purity, force and beauty, all the more as our German tongue has ever been held very difficult and resistant to grammatical rules." This Old Protestant conception is still echoed in the popular judgment, repeated innumerable times : Luther is the creator of Modern High German, spoken and written. But these popular judgments are as a rule mere prejudices. Is this the case here ?

The founder of German philology, Jakob Grimm, still essentially shared the Old Protestant conception. "Luther's language," he said, "must, by reason of its almost miraculous purity, and also its powerful influence, be regarded as the kernel and foundation of the New High German language, crystallised in a form from which up to the present day only very insignificant departures have been made, and these mainly to the detriment of force and expression. New High German may indeed be called the Protestant dialect, the character of which, breathing liberty, had already long been conquering poets and prose-writers without their knowledge. Our language has lost in phonetics and morphology, in the irresistible course of all things, but for what has nourished its body and spirit, rejuvenated it and at last brought forth the blossoms of a new poesy, we are indebted to no one more than to Luther."

But Grimm's collaborators and followers did not adhere to the judgment of the old master on this particular point. Soon Karl Müllenhoff set up the thesis that the crystallisation of New High German begins, not with Luther, but a century and a half before Luther's time, in the Chancery of the Luxemburg Kings of Bohemia. Luther, he says, marks not the beginning but simply the zenith of the early New High German period, which is bounded by the years 1350 and 1650. The period in the history of the language which results in the spoken and written German of to-day begins only in 1650, with the dropping of the archaic distinction between singular and plural in the preterite of strong verbs (Luther : *er greif, sie griffen* ; since 1650 : *er griff, sie griffen*). But even in the period of early New High German from 1518 to 1650, Luther's language is by no means the exclusive standard. The Court language of the Frankish princes is still, during Luther's lifetime, the highest authority for influential circles, and the language of the Chanceries of the various States, especially the Imperial Chancery, is regarded as the highest model by grammarians even in the seventeenth century. If in spite of this Luther's German cannot be denied a prominent part in the linguistic unification of Germany, it is still not justifiable to ascribe this success to Luther himself. If the centre of gravity of literary development had not lain in Silesia and Upper Saxony throughout the seventeenth century, and if Luther's written German had not found such strong support in essential points in the Chanceries during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, it would hardly have penetrated. The often intolerant insistence on Luther's language by the Protestants in any case rather impeded than assisted the victory of the common speech.

Nor is it only Grimm's view of Luther's position in the history of language which has been challenged ; his judgment on the aesthetic value of Luther's German has also met with lively opposition. Paul de Lagarde considers that Luther simply translated the Bible into the ugly Chancery German of Saxony. This Chancery German, he thinks, was in force and beauty far inferior to the German prose of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Thus there is no reason for counting Luther among the masters of the German language. Though he does not definitely say it, Lagarde, like certain Jesuits of the seventeenth century, is obviously of the opinion that Luther's influence was one of the most damaging that the German language has ever undergone.

This brief survey shows that the Luther problem, even regarded as a philological problem, is still far from being satisfactorily solved. Nor is such a solution to be expected at present. As long as Luther's works are not available in a complete and reliable text, and Luther's vocabulary and use of words are not precisely determined, no conclusive judgment upon Luther's German can be pronounced ; and as long as the history of the New High German written language is so little explored, Luther's position in the history of the language can also not be exactly defined. What we know just enables us to test these widely divergent opinions of the scholars, and to determine the direction in which the final solution may be presumed to lie.

Luther himself most decisively rejected the notion that he was the creator of a new German. "I have no definite, especial speech of my own in German, but use the common German speech, that both Highlanders and Lowlanders (Upper Germans and Lower Germans) may understand me. I speak after the manner of the Saxon Chancery, which all the princes and kings of Germany follow. All the Imperial cities and princely courts write according to the chanceries of Saxony and our sovereign. For that reason it is the commonest German language. Emperor Maximilian, Elector Friedrich, Duke of Saxony (Friedrich der Weise), have thus drawn the German languages of the Empire together into *one* definite language." This famous utterance does not escape Lagarde, but he entirely misunderstands it because he does not take the trouble to test it. Luther certainly states here that he did not invent a new German, that there existed already a common German, and that this common German was written in the State Chanceries, especially those of the Emperor and the Saxon Elector. In this, indeed, he was quite right. In the Chancery of the Luxemburg Kings of Bohemia it can be proved that even before 1350 preference was given to a written German which in phonology strikes the mean between Middle German and the Austro-Bavarian speech. This Luxemburg Court and Chancery German extended, at the turn of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, into the lands bordering on Bohemia—Silesia and Upper and Lower Lusatia. Fifty years later, under the Emperor Friedrich III, it became the standard for the Hapsburg Chancery, to which were soon added those of the most powerful Middle German princes—the Chanceries of Hesse, Electoral Saxony and Mainz. Whether this was in Saxony, as Luther apparently assumes, the result of a formal agreement between Emperor Maximilian and Elector Friedrich, is indeed more than doubtful. All that is certain is that at the beginning of the sixteenth century the Imperial and Saxon Chanceries, and also those of the larger cities of Upper Saxony, followed essentially the same rules in phonology. This is certainly a very important fact. Nevertheless we must be careful not to overestimate its importance. What the Imperial and Saxon Chanceries were aiming at, and what they partially achieved, was uniformity in phonology, in orthography, and perhaps in inflection. Vocabulary was of less importance to them, since they moved always in a very limited circle of concepts and thoughts, and in syntax they were entirely governed by the peculiar taste which has made the expression "official style" a term of opprobium. It was thus only upon phonetics, orthography and possibly inflection that this Chancery German could obtain an influence. But did it in fact exercise any influence, outside the chanceries, before Luther's time? This question is not yet ripe for an answer. So far the influence of the Chancery has only been proved in works emanating from officials. Those writers and printers of the early sixteenth century with whom we are more familiar follow both in phonology and in inflection not the Chancery but the usage of their native speech. Thus at the time of Luther's appearance there was in reality no common German language, written or spoken; there was on the contrary such a multitude of dialects that often people could not be understood thirty miles from home, and beside these a model of phonology, orthography and to some extent inflection, recognised as authoritative only in very limited circles. Furthermore, this Chancery language or Chancery orthography was itself by no means a definite and constant language. The clerks still followed their individual taste, even for instance in spelling, so imperturbably that the superficial observer may well come to the conclusion that they were governed by no rules or standards of language whatever.

What attitude did Luther adopt towards this Chancery language? As he expressly states, he adheres in essentials to the usage of the Saxon Chancery in phonology, orthography and inflection; indeed he is, as far as we know, the first influential writer to do this quite consciously and deliberately. But in vocabulary he is absolutely independent; in syntax he, like Goethe and other great writers, makes concessions to the official style only in letters to State functionaries, and even in orthography and phonology, from 1523 onwards, he very frequently goes his own way. Thus he quite consciously enters into a movement towards linguistic unity which has already been in existence for some time; but it is he who first introduces this movement into literature. By the supreme position which he fills in literature, he at once bestows on the movement an extraordinary influence, and at the same time guides it into entirely new paths. Not only does he establish for the first time a kind of orthography; unconsciously he gives in his writings the model of a German syntax derived not from the Chancery style but from the living spoken word, and lastly he lays the foundation for the common German vocabulary of the modern literary language.

But is not this again saying too much? It has been maintained that the importation of Middle German words into Upper Germany began already round about 1300. As proof of this it is stated that Middle German mystics worked with great success in Upper Germany in the fourteenth century, that Middle German poetic works found a remarkably large circle of readers in Upper Germany at that time, and that out of the four oldest German manuscripts of the Bible, two originated in Bohemia. But these proofs do not quite hold water. There was only one mystic of Middle German origin who achieved anything great as a writer—Master Eckhart. His literary legacy, however, has not yet been by any means thoroughly sifted, far less philologically examined. What, for instance, has been claimed as Middle German in the language of Tauler is not Middle German, but Upper German. Nor does any trace remain in the *belles-lettres* of the fifteenth century of a preponderance of Middle Germany. It may rather be said that Upper Germany was so much superior to the rest of Germany, in literature as in other departments of civilisation, that one would expect it in the natural course of things to take the lead shortly in the matter of language also. This development did not take place. Middle Germany gained predominance, for the simple reason that it brought forth the first writer of the German tongue whose works were read with passionate interest by the whole nation, and whose words had a deeper and more lasting effect on them than those of any poet or thinker before or since. Thus, if indeed Middle German elements were introduced into Upper Germany before Luther's time, this only prepared the way in Upper Germany for Luther's language. It is, in any case, only after Luther's advent that this importation became conspicuous and definitely provable. The fact that during the seventeenth century the centre of gravity in the literary development lay in Silesia and Upper Saxony was certainly advantageous to Luther's language. But the significance of this fact must not be exaggerated. Literary Germany at that time was identical with Protestant Germany. And for Protestant Germany Luther's Bible was the Book of

Books, the book which everybody knew and from which all strata of the population learned written German. The whole of pure literature could hardly compete, in either depth or extent of influence, with this one book. The only doubt is whether it was always Luther's German which was so universally propagated through Luther's Bible. For in the course of the years Luther's text was considerably altered. Dialectal peculiarities found their way into it, obsolete words and forms were expunged. But important as these alterations were, their importance must not be overestimated. They concerned principally Luther's grammar, not Luther's vocabulary. It was therefore at no foreign author's school, but Luther's, that the Germans, until the eighteenth century, learnt to speak and write the common German.

Thus there is still no reason to abandon as obsolete Jakob Grimm's opinion that Luther's German was the foundation of the crystallisation of New High German, and to seek a new formula to describe Luther's position in the history of the language. It is only necessary to add in completion that this crystallisation had already begun in the Chancery of the Luxemburg kings. Then the Chancery is not deprived of its due. Its service to written New High German is fully recognised, and at the same time reduced to its true measure. For there is no doubt that the efforts of the Chancery towards unity were only able to achieve victory because the greatest writer of the sixteenth century allied himself with them. Nor does Grimm's formula obscure the fact that Luther was no innovator in grammar, and that his language offers grammarians nothing which can interest them so much as the extinction of the old plural in the preterite of strong verbs; and lastly, the formula is entirely just to the fact that modern written German is no longer Luther's written German, but a development of it in which many changes have taken place. For Luther's German is there only expressly designated as the *foundation* of the New High German of to-day.

But to assign such an inordinate influence on the development of language to a single man is asking rather much of the philological student. He will at least demand a sufficient explanation of this fact, which has no parallel in the history of language. Such an explanation might be found, since the problem is a linguistic one, in certain facts in the history of the language. Luther was a Middle German by birth. Thus he belonged to that dialectal area which seemed destined before others to act as intermediary between North and South in language also and to create a common language comprehensible to all Germans. But though in vocabulary and grammar he mostly followed the usage of his home, he was by no means slavishly bound to his native dialect. He had travelled and had "forgotten his countrymen," as Mathesius says. In long journeys on foot he had learnt to know not only Upper Saxony and Thuringia, but also the Palatinate, Franconia, Bavaria, Tyrol, Switzerland, Swabia and the Rhineland. In addition, as the adviser of the whole nation's conscience, he had almost every day to read and answer letters and inquiries from all parts and in all tongues of Germany, and lastly, in later years, he met every day at his table people from the most different districts of Germany, Saxons and Meisseners, Pomeranians and Franconians, Austrians and Lower Saxons, Bavarians and Swabians. Thus he had abundant opportunity to learn from other dialects and develop his German into a common language comprehensible to all. But such opportunities are only profitable to him who knows how to use them. Luther possessed this gift. He practised with innate talent the art of "watching people's mouths," observed with a penetrating eye how the various German races moved their lips in speaking, and was fond of imitating the different accents himself.

All these facts, however, are not sufficient to explain the great success of Luther's German. They only show how well qualified the reformer was, by his origin and his natural gifts, for his linguistic mission. But they contribute nothing to the solution of the actual problem, the answering of the question how it came about that Luther became an *authority* to the Germans in matters of language. This question would appear to be one of literary aesthetics. Even to-day an author only gains an influence on written language if his style expresses the taste of his contemporaries. Is then the success of Luther's language a success of Luther the writer and stylist ? This view is indeed a very tempting one. For whatever fault may be found with the reformer, his position as a writer and stylist must at all events be recognised. Who can equal him even in range of voice ? All tones, from the wildest burst of anger to the tenderest expression of reverence and love, from the most solemn emotion to the most comic burlesque, are equally at his command. Whether he is scolding, playful, mocking, scornful, plaintive, accusatory, admonitory, instructive, condemnatory, angry, always he astonishes us with his incomparable force and richness of expression, his absolutely inexhaustible abundance of original yet entirely unforced metaphors, his really amazing store of trenchant popular expressions. At the same time, though he is no anxious purist, his vocabulary is purer German than that of any other great German writer, and his construction of sentences, though he, too, allows himself many Latinisms, is better German than that of all his German-writing contemporaries. Only in the development of his ideas does he betray, even in his writings, that he is no organiser. For the most part he is content to march out his statements one after another, often without much order or arrangement, like theses in a disputation, and prove each one in turn, regardless of repetition and digression. The comfortable form of the academic disputation, which seeks to attain the proof aimed at by a succession of theses in no very strict order, obviously appears to him the most suitable form also for literary discussion.[1] But this defect is closely connected with a characteristic merit of his style. The habit of always imagining his adversary present, as in a disputation, gives his arguments the passionate heat, the freshness, vivacity and directness of oral dispute. Hence the terrific force, especially of his great literary attacks, in which indeed, as he once says, he resembles a restless, stormy fighter, battling with thunder, lightning, wind, earthquake and fire.

---

[1] Luther could produce literary work very quickly. But as a rule, as his manuscripts show, he devoted much care and relatively much time to the working-out of his material, cf. *Lutherstudien*, pp. 251 ff. Probably he also never preached without drafting out his sermon first : cf. *Table Talk*, No. 3494.

But even if we allow all due honour to Luther as a writer, we must yet ask whether it was really only the force and beauty of his style which made his language appear such a model to the Germans. Certain very important facts contradict this view. First, there is the consideration that of all his books those which had most influence on the development of the language were a translation—the German Bible—and a school-book—the Lesser Catechism; both undoubtedly great achievements, but not the books in which Luther shows his whole originality and greatness as a stylist. In addition to this we have the remarkable circumstance that he began to affect literary production before his style was fully mature either from the linguistic or the literary point of view. Whereas in 1518, when he published his first German sermons, there appeared in Germany only 150 books in the German language, in 1519 their number already leapt to 260, in 1520 to 570, in 1521 to 620, in 1522 to 680, in 1523 to 935, in 1524 to 990. The majority of these books, however, were concerned with the religious question; they were thus occasioned by Luther's advent, and, in fact, a considerable proportion of them were composed by him. This is sufficient proof that it was not the form, but the substance of his writings which so powerfully increased the demand for German books. The substance interested everyone, and was intended to interest everyone. For that reason he himself wrote in German, for that reason even humanists and scholars who had hitherto written only Latin, such as Ulrich von Hutten and Karlstadt, now resolved to write German also. For that reason the literary struggle which began on his appearance was pursued mainly in the German language, and for that reason the need was soon felt to conduct the divine service in German and to read the Bible in a German translation from the original languages.

Luther's unique position in the history of the language is thus only a consequence of his special position in the general historical development. He became the authority among Germans in matters of language because he was their highest authority in questions of faith and personal conduct. Had he not been a religious reformer and had he not left Protestant Germany, in the German Bible, a book which by reason of its religious importance was involuntarily regarded as a model of language also, he would never have obtained such powerful influence on the development of the popular and literary language. The fact that he was better qualified for this mission than any of his contemporaries, and that he had no equal in Germany as a writer and stylist, naturally favoured the spread of the *Luthersprache* greatly, but this language only became the standard for literary and popular German because Luther was the Reformer and his Bible was to German Protestants the Book of Books. This is borne out by the fact that where his Bible was not read, the new common language did not immediately gain an entry. In these districts its reception took place only in the age of the Enlightenment, under the influence of the great literary movement which began in the seventeenth century in the Protestant territories of Central Germany, and in the eighteenth century gradually spread over the whole of the German-speaking lands.

These arguments show that the Luther problem, even regarded as a problem in the history of civilisation, can only be solved if we bear always in mind that the reformer was, before all things, an "ecclesiast"—a preacher, spiritual pastor and religious writer. Any consideration of his life-work must take this basis of his activity as its starting-point. Only then will the radius of the great movement connected with his name be rightly defined, and the historical conditions which have modified the nature and extent of his influence at different times be in every case exactly determined. Study and criticism of the original documentary evidence are the indispensable requisite for the performance of the task. But there is something even more essential—

understanding of the spiritual power which was the first cause of this productivity: the piety, the religion of the reformer. Such an understanding is only to be attained by one who is capable of entering into the psychological attitude which Luther demands, and who knows from his own experience that there is no other way to inward peace, to joyous action and brave endurance of all distress save the way which he unweariedly proclaims: the way which leads through renunciation of selfish preoccupations to community with the "higher Self," Whose abundance he always knew awaited him, offering grace upon grace.

APPENDIX A

PICTURES OF LUTHER (see pp. 2 ff.)

THE following information is intended merely to give general indications upon this branch of art, which has so far been sadly neglected by specialists. *Cf.* Eduard Flechsig, *Cranachstudien*, vol. i., 1897, pp. 257 ff. Works of Cranach, Saxon Historical Commission. Hans Preuss, *Lutherbildnisse*. The earliest picture of Luther at present known is a small, rough woodcut on the title-page of a sermon printed in Leipzig in 1519, reproduced in Preuss, *loc. cit.* p. 25. The model was probably a medal which, however, must have been very hastily and carelessly copied. The picture represents a monk preaching, wearing a preacher's gown, his left hand raised in gesticulation. The few strokes which the artist has devoted to the face show a lean, monkish physiognomy, in no way resembling the historic Luther. The following portraits, which are in chronological order, are all products of Cranach's studio in Wittenberg :

1. Luther as a monk, full face, copper engraving of 1520 by Lukas Cranach the elder, specimen for instance at Koburg Castle. Copies : (1) Luther the monk in his cell, engraving of 1520 ; (2) Luther with halo and the dove of the Holy Ghost, woodcut by Hans Baldung Grien, *cf.* Hans Preuss, pp. 26–28.

2. Luther as a monk with doctor's baretta, profile, engraving by Cranach the elder of 1521 ; it cannot be proved that these are the portraits which Luther sent to Spalatin on March 7, 1521, at Cranach's wish (Enders, 3, 106 f.), and that Cranach intended to sell them at the Diet of Worms, for the picture shows no "subscription" of Luther's, and at that time nothing was known in Wittenberg of Luther's summons to Worms. Nor can the origin of the Latin subscription by Spalatin be proved. Two versions of this, the "greatest, finest portrait of Cranach's hand and the most full of character" (Flechsig) have come down to

us: one with a light, the other with a dark background; a specimen of the former version, which is very rare, is to be found at Koburg Castle. Copies: Cast medal, dated 1521, probably originating in Cranach's studio, *e.g.* examples in the Kaiser Friedrich Museum, Berlin, and the Münzkabinett at Gotha, *cf.* Preuss, p. 29; (2) engraving by Albert Altdorfer of 1522, *cf.* Schreckenbach-Neubert, *Luther*, p. 97; (3) engraving by Daniel Hopfer of 1523, with halo and German translation of the Latin distich in the original. The execution is less delicate owing to the method of the Hopfers, who etched on iron instead of copper, *cf.* the engraving of the young Charles V on the Koburg, very characteristic of this technique, and the well-known engraving "Sickingen" by Hieronynimus Hopfer; (4) closely connected is the bronze medal "Luther in his 36th year," thus alleged to be of the year 1519, example in the Münzkabinett, Berlin, *cf.* Schreckenbach-Neubert, *Luther*, p. 71.

3. Luther as Junker Jörg, oil-painting in the Museum der bildenden Künste, Leipzig, "one of Cranach's best portraits" (Flechsig), begun probably between December 4 and 9, 1521, *cf.* above, p. 142. The picture was entirely covered with mildew, and the tip of the nose and lobes of the ears had to be restored, *cf.* E. Kroker in the *Leipziger Kalender* for 1907, p. 206, Julius Vogel in the *Zeitschrift für bildende Kunst*, Nov.–Dec. 1917. Best-known copy: Luther as Junker Jörg, woodcut from Cranach's studio, executed possibly by Cranach himself before March 6, 1522, widely known and much imitated at an early date.

4. Small circular portraits of Luther and his wife, 10 cm. in diameter, probably carried out on Luther's order at the time of his marriage in 1525 to be given away as presents. The example in the Lutherhalle at Wittenberg, now restored, is considered the best, *cf.* title-page. Other examples are in the Art Collection at Basel and the Ugglas Collection at Forsmark, Sweden.

5. Portraits of Luther and his wife of 1526, considered by Flechsig to be enlarged reproductions of the small pictures of 1525, executed for sale in two sizes. A pair of

the larger series (37½ × 24½ cm.) was formerly in the Kaufmann Gallery, Berlin, sold by auction on December 3, 1917. The picture of Luther is considered the finest of all Cranach's existing portraits of Luther. It is probably identical with the portrait reproduced with the note "Munich, in private possession" in Bezold's *Geschichte der deutschen Reformation*, p. 448. Specimens of the smaller edition (9½ × 13½ cm.) are owned by the Wolfenbüttel Library and the Schwerin Museum.

6. Traced drawing in the Weimar Museum, Luther in preacher's robe and baretta, full face, probably by Hans Cranach, the model for the Luther portraits produced wholesale in the years 1528–9, now in the Weimar Museum, Darmstadt, Gotha, Wörlitz, the Uffizi Galleries, Florence, the Poldi-Pezzoli Museum, Milan, Hamburg (in the possession of the Arnemann family), the Lutherhalle, Wittenberg, and for the circular portrait in the Wittenberg *Universitätsmatrikel*, I, Michaelmas 1531. These factory products are all artistically and historically worthless. The following are based on pictures of this series: the copper engraving by Jakob Bink of 1530, *cf.* Schreckenbach-Neubert, p. 152, the well-known engraving of Heinrich Aldegrever of Paderborn, 1540, cf. *ibid.* p. 145—it is proved that Aldegrever never saw Luther—and the medal of 1537, probably the work of Jörg Stampfer, *ibid.* p. 119. The companion to this portrait of Luther shows Katharina in the cap of a married woman. The drawing in Berlin is also still in existence, *cf.* L. Köstlin, *Luther's Leben*, p. 391.

7. Portraits of Luther and Melancthon carried out wholesale in Cranach's studio at the same time as portraits of the two Electors, Friedrich and Johann, in two sizes, a larger (63 × 40 cm.), of which an example exists in the Städelsches Institut, Frankfurt, and a smaller (18 × 25 cm.), of which there are many specimens. The best known are those in the Brunswick Museum, the Pinakothek at Munich, the Dresden Gallery and the Germanische Museum at Nuremberg, *cf.* Preuss, pp. 38, 39. The last named is considered the best.

8. Double portraits of Luther and Melancthon dated 1542 or 1543, or undated, also a wholesale article of Cranach's studio. The particular type of this portrait is best shown in the example in the Lutherhalle, mentioned on p. 3, which is classed by Bode and Friedländer as a work of the younger Cranach, and attributed to the year 1546 for reasons which I do not know. Luther here wears an open black gown over a black doublet. The white shirt, showing a red *Bändlein* across the chest (cf. *Ickelschamer Klag*, ed. Enders, p. 48), ends in a small black-bordered collar tied with black laces. The head is bare. The reformer holds in his hands a book with metal clasps. The same model was used by the younger Cranach for the Weimar altar-piece (1555), the monument to Michael Meinenburg in St. Basil's Church, Nordhausen (1558, *cf.* Schreckenbach-Neubert, p. 152), the "Last Supper" in the Castle Church, Dessau (1568, cf. *ibid.* p. 133). It is also the basis of the portrait of Luther in the so-called pedigree of Cranach in the former Königliche Bibliothek, Berlin (according to Schuchardt, *Cranach* ii. 27 f., of the year 1543), the woodcut *Epitaphium Lutheri* of 1546, so often copied by other artists in this genre, *cf.* Schreckenbach-Neubert, p. 101, Preuss, p. 41, the well-known woodcut "The Baptism of Christ," with the city of Wittenberg in the background and the family of Friedrich the Magnanimous in the foreground, etc. This portrait represents the head of Luther, which has become typical and has been imitated countless times, *cf.* also the above-mentioned relief from St. Nicholas' Church, Döbeln, and the relief in the Kieritzsch Church, Schreckenbach-Neubert, p. 153. The red ribbon on the shirt is sometimes replaced by a red vest. It may therefore be stated that the type came into existence in the years 1542–3, *i.e.* during Luther's lifetime, and that the younger Cranach is to be regarded as its true originator.

The predella of the altar-piece in the town church at Wittenberg is in a special position. This picture is regarded in Wittenberg as a genuine work of the elder Cranach of the year 1546, but according to Schuchardt, ii. 148, it is certainly spurious. Luther is represented as a preacher in the pulpit, with dark hair. In Schuchardt's view this portrait cannot be compared with any of the elder Cranach's good pictures. In Wittenberg, on the other hand, it is considered one of the very best portraits of Luther. This divergence shows how much remains to be done in this sphere. In particular, a work on the *younger* Lukas Cranach is needed. Only when such a work exists will it be possible to write a history of the Luther portrait.

Luther on his deathbed (see p. 3). Justus Jonas and M. Cölius, *Vom Christlichen Abschied Lutheri* (Wittenberg 1546), c. 111, *cf*. G. Förstermann, *Denkmale*, p. 74, Christof Schubart, *Die Berichte über Luther's Tod und Begräbnis* (Weimar 1917), p. 66, 5: "Thus at Eisleben *two* artists painted the dead man's face: one, an inhabitant of Eisleben, while he still lay in bed in his room"—*i.e.* on February 18—"the other, Master Lucas Fortenagel of Halle, after he had lain one night in the coffin"—*i.e.* on February 19. Johann Landau in Jakob Strieder's *Authentische Berichte über Luther's letzte Lebenstunden* (Lietzmann's small texts No. 99), p. 38: After the corpse had been laid in the pewter coffin, on February 18th, "*pictor quidam ex Hallis confestim vocatus jussu comitum mortuum, ut erat, depinxit.*" On February 19th, after the coffin had been brought into St. Andrew's Church at 3 o'clock in the afternoon and placed in the choir, and Jonas had preached a furious sermon, "*pictor Hallensis jussus est illo tempore adhuc semel et melius quidem quam antea corpus mortui depingere.*" The two reports do not contradict, but complement each other. They show that the dead man was painted on February 18 and 19 three times: the first time early on February 18, when he was laid out on the bed in Doctor Drachstädt's house, by an unknown painter of Eisleben, the second, on the afternoon of February 18 in the same place, after he had been placed in the pewter coffin, by the painter Lucas Fortenagel, who had been summoned in haste by the Count of Mansfeld from Halle, about 12½ miles away, and the third time on the afternoon of February 19, some time after 3 o'clock, in the choir of St. Andrew's Church, again and more successfully by Fortenagel. All we know of Fortenagel is that he was the son of the painter Jörg Fortenagel, born in 1505 in Augsburg, worked from 1542 to 1546 in Halle and then returned to Augsburg. Of his works only one has been discovered signed with his name; two *ex libris*, exceptionally carefully studied in various works, *cf.* Ulrich Thieme, *Allgemeines Lexicon der bildenden Künste* xii. 602 f. Three old pictures of Luther after his death are in existence: one in the Dresden Gallery, unsigned; two in the University Library, Leipzig: a small one, unsigned and much restored, and a larger one, also much restored, bearing at the bottom, on the right, the date 1574. The latter has been taken for Fortenagel's picture. The date, hitherto unnoticed, proves that this opinion is erroneous. It is, however, not impossible that it is a copy after Fortenagel. There was in the possession of the Director of the Leipzig University Library, the Professor of Theology Christian Friedrich Börner, *ob.* 1753 (concerning whom, see O. Kirn, *Die Leipziger theologische Fakultät*, pp. 140 ff.), an *effigies M. L. anno* 1546 *in Domino Jesu defuncti e Cranachii archetypo diligenter imitata*, *i.e.* a copy of the copy by the younger Cranach of Fortenagel's picture, formerly in the Castle Church at Wittenberg, *cf.* Schubart, p. 133. It is possible that this *effigies* of Börner's is identical with the picture in question. I was unable to obtain any closer information on the matter at the University Library. The general impression of the picture does not contradict this supposition, *cf.* the excellent reproductions in Schreckenbach-Neubert, p. 158. The other two portrait are horrible daubs, which cannot be attributed to such a notoriously careful and conscientious painter as Fortenagel. It is, of course, not impossible that one of them is the work of the anonymous painter of Eisleben, who was certainly not a great artist; had he been so, the Count of Mansfeld would not have brought Fortenagel so hastily from Halle.

The so-called death-mask (*cf.* the not unexceptionable reproduction in Schreckenbach-Neubert, p. 158) is described in detail in the *Monatschrift des Vereins für religiöse Kunst*, 1917, pp. 121–139. The question is whether, as is maintained, the hands and facial mask of the figure were in reality moulded from the corpse during the time between 6.45 P.M. on February 20, 1546, and 6 A.M. on February 21, while the coffin containing Luther's body stood in St. Mary's Church, Halle, and whether the facial mask was then completed with rough outlines into a head. The answer is, No. (1) The pewter coffin in which the corpse was placed on February 18 was, according to Ratzeberger, *Handschriftliche Geschichte*, ed. Chr. Gottlob Neudecker, p. 141, "cast," *i.e.* sealed in Eisleben before the funeral procession, that is, on February 20 at the latest, before midday. (2) The coffin was closed when it arrived in Halle and was not re-opened there, for otherwise it would have been impossible for the monks and other Papists in Halle to state: *vacuum nos advexisse feretrum*, as Jonas writes on March 9, 1546, *cf.* Strieder, *Berichte über Luthers letzte Lebensstunden*, p. 24, line 14. (3) The Halle figure is first mentioned in 1742 in a work by J. J. Rambach. There also the statement is made for the first time that the wax parts were cast in Halle on February 20–21, 1546, *cf.* F. Loofs in the supplement to No. 471 of the *Saale-Zeitung*, October 7, 1917. If any cast of Luther's face and hands was made at that time, it can only have been in Eisleben on February 18, 19, or early on the 20th. There is, however, not a word of any such event in the very numerous and in many cases very detailed accounts of Luther's death. It is certainly *possible* that Lukas Fortenagel, having so little time for his work, made such a cast, and it is *possible* that the mask and hands later came to Halle in this way. But there is absolutely no evidence of it. I do not know at all whether such a thing was already customary in Germany at that time. I know of evidence for it only in Italy, *cf.* my *Studien zur Geschichte der Gesellschaft Jesu*, i. 275 ff. The genuineness of the alleged mask is, therefore, more than doubtful. Loofs thinks that the "mask" is "the likeness of a man so far unknown, which was not taken for a likeness of Luther until later, probably only after 1717."

APPENDIX B

CHRONOLOGICAL SUMMARY OF LUTHER'S LIFE FROM 1483 (?) TO 1518

1483 (?). Born after 11 o'clock at night at Eisleben. The date is certain but not the year. Many people then did not know exactly how old they were, Luther among them. As to-day in the East, the mothers and midwives were the best informed on the point, *cf.* my *Studien zur Geschichte der Gesellschaft Jesu*, i. 12 f. Therefore it was of Luther's mother that Melancthon inquired on the subject. But the old woman was no longer able to give him exact information. Jakob, Luther's younger brother, assured him, however, that the *opinio familiae* was 1483, *Corpus Reformatorum*, vi. 156. The *opinio familiae* is, of course, of absolutely no value in such matters.

Six months after Martin's birth Hans Luther removed to Mansfeld, Cölius' sermon of February 20, 1546, G. Förstemann, *Denkmale*, p. 56.

Circa 1488–97. Luther at the municipal Latin school, Mansfeld. By his own information, Correspondence, ed. Enders, xvi. 155 (1544), his "good old friend" Nikolaus Ömler often carried him the short distance from his parents' house to the school. He must then have been only four or five years old when he was sent to school. "Hänschen" Luther also began to learn in his fourth year.

Circa 1496–7. Luther with Hans Reinicke at the school of the Brothers of the Common Life in Magdeburg, *Werke*, Erlangen ed., liii. 137, *cf.* Correspondence, ed. Enders, ii. 293 f. He received board and lodging, at least temporarily, in the house of Paulus Mosshauer, an official of the Archbishop, *cf.* Ernst Barnikol, *Luther in Magdeburg*, in *Theologische Arbeiten aus dem Rheinischen Wissenschaftlichen Predigerverein.*

Circa 1497–1501. Luther at St. George's School in Eisenach. Rector, Johann Trebonius; assistant teacher, Wigand Güldennapf of Fritzlar. He lived at first, probably, with his maternal relative, Konrad Hutter, verger at St. Nicholas, and earned his board as a *Partekenhengst*, *i.e.* by singing in the streets. Later he was taken into the house of Heinrich Schalbe, in return for which he had to take Heinrich's son, Kaspar, to school; see under with reference to the Ursula legend.

1501, at the end of April. "Martinus Luther of Mansfeldt" is enrolled in the University of Erfurt, of which Jodokus Trutvetter was rector, and received in the St. George's hostel at the Lehmannsbrücke, O. Clemen, *Beitrage*, ii. 3. Autumn 1502, Luther takes the examination for *baccalaureus artium*; on the examination, *cf*. Scheel, i. 166 ff.

1505, *c*. January 6. Luther received as *magister artium*, being the second among 17, *ibid*. i. 174. On April 24 he begins to teach in the Faculty of Arts, from May 20 he is studying in the Faculty of Law, *ibid*. i. 237 f. Meanwhile he had, it appears, entered the Porta Coeli hostel, cf. *Studien und Kritiken*, 1897, p. 578.

End of June. Luther at Mansfeld on holiday. *C*. July 2. At Stotternheim *in itinere et fulmine ita consternatus, ut in terrore dixisset*: "Help me, St. Anne, and I will become a monk," Table Talk, No. 4707, cf. *Werke*, Weimar ed., viii. 573, Correspondence, ed. Enders, ii. 208, *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte*, v. 370; on the locality, see Joh. Biereye in *Jahrbücher der Akademie der gemeinnutzigen Wissenchaften*, Erfurt, xliii. (1917), 117 ff.

July 16 (*die altera ante Alexii*). Luther invites his friends to the Himmelspforte hostel for a *valedictio*, Table Talk, No. 4707.

July 17 (*die S. Alexii*, though he says on July 16, 1539, "to-day is the anniversary," *ibid*.). Luther applies for admission to the convent of the Augustinian Eremites, *ibid*. He stays first for several weeks as a guest in the guest-house attached to the monastery, *cf*. Biereye, *ibid*. p. 184 f. *C*. August. The plague in Mansfeld. Two of Luther's brothers die. Hans Luther gives Martin permission to enter the monastic state, *Bavarus Rhapsodiae*, ii. 752.

Circa September. Luther received as a novice, as to the place of the reception, *cf.* Biereye, pp. 186 f., as to the ceremony itself, Theodor Th. Neubauer, *ibid.* pp. 99 ff.

1506, *c.* beginning of September. Luther admitted to make his profession, cf. *ibid.* pp. 105 ff., Scheel, ii. 28 ff.

Probably September 19. Luther ordained sub-deacon in the Augustinians' Church, by the Prior Winand von Diedenhofen, *ibid.* p. 33.

Probably December 19. Luther ordained deacon by the suffragan bishop of Erfurt, Johann Bonemilch von Lasphe, *ibid.*

1507, probably April 3. Luther receives consecration as priest by the suffragan bishop, before the high altar in the Cathedral, *cf.* G. Buchwald, *Z.K.G.*, xxxvii. 217 f., Biereye, *loc. cit.* p. 183.

Before April 22. On a visit to Eisenach, Correspondence, i. 2. April 22. Luther invites the vicar, Braun of Eisenach, to his first Mass, *ibid.*, i. 1 ff.

May 2. Luther celebrates his first Mass, cf. *Bavarus Rhapsodiae*, ii. 753. Table Talk, No. 1558, 3556 A. *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte*, v. 354; *Werke*, Weimar ed., xliii. 382, *cf.* Scheel, ii. 44 ff.

Luther begins the study of theology under the direction of the teacher of the order, Dr. Johann Nathin, *ibid.* pp. 65 ff.

1508, autumn. Luther transferred to Wittenberg, where he undertakes to lecture on the Nicomachean Ethics of Aristotle, in place of Brother Wolfgang Ostermayr. G. Oergel, *Vom jungen Luther*, pp. 109 f. First intimate acquaintance with Staupitz, see above, p. 71.

1509, March 9. Luther promoted in Wittenberg to *baccalaurens biblicus*, *Liber decanorum Witeb.* p. 4, Correspondence, i. 18. As such he has to comment on several chapters of the Bible, in addition to his philosophical lectures, Scheel, ii. 192.

Autumn, before October 14 (*Liber*, p. 5). Luther appointed *Sententiarius*, Correspondence, i. 23, *cf.* Oergel, p. 113, is called back to Erfurt where, after overcoming all kinds of difficulties, he is admitted as *Sententiarius*, having delivered the *principium* (the necessary lecture and disputation) in the auditorium of the Porta Coeli hostel, Correspondence, i. 18, 23 f., Scheel, ii. 214 ff. He then lectures on the *Sententiae* in the auditorium of his monastery until autumn 1510, Correspondence, i. 24 (*per sesquiannum*). On the manuscript preparations for his lectures, cf. *Werke*, Weimar ed., ix. 29 ff., and the explanatory observations of Scheel, ii. 217 ff. At the same time he begins to read Augustine industriously, *Werke*, ix. 2 ff., and attempts to learn Hebrew with the aid of Reuchlin's *Rudimenta* (grammar and small vocabulary), Correspondence, iii. 379 (May 29, 1522). Also he already begins Greek, cf. *Werke*, ix. 16, l. 5; 24, l. 9; 25, l. 35, etc.

1510, *c*. October. Luther, with Dr. Nathin, in Halle visiting the Cathedral Provost, Adolf von Anhalt, in connection with the dispute on the union of the monasteries; Boehmer, *Luther's Romfahrt*, p. 57, 2.

Late autumn. Journey to Rome, *ibid*. pp. 1–36.

1511, January. Four weeks in Rome, *ibid*. pp. 87 ff.,

C. August. Recalled to Wittenberg, *ibid*. p. 64.

1512, spring. Journey to Cologne to the chapter meeting of the Augustinian Congregation, *ibid*. p. 65, cf. *Werke*, Weimar ed., xxxiv. 1, xxii. 585; German Bible, iii. 578; Table Talk, No. 3781. *Werke*, Erlangen ed., lxii. 371.

May. Chapter meeting at Cologne. The chapter chooses him as sub-prior at Wittenberg and promotes him Doctor. Correspondence, i. 7; *cf*. i. 24; *Werke*, Weimar ed., xxxi. 1, 212. Table Talk, No. 2255a, 2739, 4091. On his return he begins, on Staupitz' order, to preach, Table Talk, No. 3143b.

October 4, Wittenberg. Luther promoted Licentiate of Theology, Scheel, ii. 311 f.

October 9, Leipzig. Luther acknowledges the receipt of 50 Gulden, which the Elector allotted him in the Rentkammer in Leipzig towards the costs of his promotion, on condition that "Martinus would hold the lectureship at Wittenberg all his life under his (Staupitz') supervision." H. Steinlein, *Luther's Doktorat* (1912), p. iv. The receipt, Correspondence, i. 9.

October 18, 1 P.M., vespers (preliminary ceremony) of promotion, October 19, 7 A.M., *aula cathedralis* (actual ceremony) in the Castle Church. Promoter, Karlstadt; *cf.* Steinlein, *ibid.*, and Scheel, ii. 313 ff.

October 22. Luther received into the Senate of the Theological Faculty, *ibid.* ii. 433, note 102. Thereupon he takes over the "*Lectura in Biblia*, founded at the Augustinian Monastery," Oergel, p. 125.

October 22, 1512–July 8, 1513. The illumination in the tower, p. 46 above.

1513, after July 8. Beginning of the Commentary on the Psalter, *Werke*, Weimar ed., iii. 1. Conclusion well before December 1515, Correspondence, i. 26. Preparatory work, *Werke*, iv, finished Commentary, *ibid.* iii. and iv.; for criticism of the text, *cf.* C. A. Meissinger, *Luther's Exegese in der Frühzeit*, pp. 6 ff.

1515. Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, terminated before September 1516, *cf.* Correspondence, i. 26; *altera Nativitatio-Mariae*, September 9, *cf.* Correspondence, iii. 233, and Boehmer in *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte*, xv.

May 1, Gotha. Chapter of the German Augustinian Congregation. Luther preaches against the vice of gossiping, *Werke*, i. 44 ff.; iv. 675 ff., and is subsequently chosen District Vicar.

June. Luther with Staupitz on the consecration of the new Augustinian monastery at Eisleben, Kolde, *Augustinerkongregation*, p. 266. Table Talk, 137.

1516, after April 15. Luther, as District Vicar, visits the Augustinian convents at the Orla, Erfurt, Gotha, Langensalza, Nordhausen, Correspondence, i. 33–39, *cf.* 51, l. 28. On June 8 he is back in Wittenberg, *ibid.* i. 39 f.

During this time Luther has discovered the fragment of the *Theologia Germanica* and begun his studies on Tauler, cf. *Römervorlesung*, ii. 205, *cf.* above, p. 73.

Before September 25. Theses for Bartholomäus Bernhardi of Feldkirch, *Werke*, i. 145 ff.; ix. 768.

September. Luther begins to prepare his Commentary on the Psalms for print, Correspondence, i. 26. A fragment of this work is still in existence, *Werke*, xxxi. 1, 464–480. That this fragment belongs here is proved by Luther's clear conception of the meaning of the Gospel and the Law, 465, l. 8, 25 f., and the improved understanding of the Hebrew, *cf.* 465, l. 35, 475, l. 8, the slight deviations from the text of the gloss of the years 1513–15.

October 27. Beginning of the Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians, Correspondence, i. 67, cf. *Werke*, ii. 443 ff.

December 4. Completion of the printing of the first edition of the *Theologia Germanica* and Preface, *Werke*, i. 152 f.

1517, March 1. Luther sends to Lang, in Erfurt, a part of the finished manuscript of the "7 Penitential Psalms," Correspondence, i. 88. The printing of this has already begun, cf. *Werke*, i. 154 ff.; ix. 768.

Beginning of the Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews; for student's version, at present not printed, *cf.* Meissinger, p. 19 ff.

September 4. The 97 Theses against the Scholastic Theology, *Werke*, i. 224 ff.; ix. 768 f.

October 31, at midday (*hora duodecima*), nailing-up of the 95 Theses, Joachim Cureus (intimate pupil of Melancthon), *Gentis Silesiae Annales* (Witebergae, 1571), p. 238. Letter to Archbishop Albrecht, Correspondence, i. 113 ff., and to the Bishop of Brandenburg, cf. *Werke*, Erlangen ed., liii. 95; Weimar ed., li. 538 ff.

Summer term 1518. Beginning of second Commentary on the Psalms, *Album Acad. Viteb*, ed. G. Förstemann, p. 72: *coeptus est legi David.* The first five Psalms were printed at the end of March 1519, *Werke*, v. 23, xxv. 197. Early in January 1520 Luther broke off the Commentary, after the exposition of Psalm 20 (21), and after January 13 began a new commentary on the pericopes of the Gospel, Correspondence, iii. 172, No. 7. Between October 22, 1512, and the year 1518 he certainly delivered commentaries also on Genesis and the Epistle to Titus, *Werke*, l. 519, and possibly others of which we do not know.

APPENDIX C

LUTHER'S FATHER GUILTY OF MANSLAUGHTER (see p. 27)

IN his work, *De raptu epistolae privatae*, the Catholic preacher, Georg Witzel, states at Eisleben in 1535 : " I might call Luther's father (*ob.* 27, 5, 1530) a man-slayer and himself a changeling of the Devil." Witzel afterwards repeated this statement several times. Whether it ever reached Luther's ears we do not know. In any case, however, he would hardly have considered it necessary to take any action ; for it was his principle never to reply to such attacks, Table Talk, 4086, 4504. As early as January 14, 1520 (Correspondence, ii. 293), he refers people who cast aspersions on his parents to the testimony of the Count of Mansfeld, not without pride. Witzel's statement became one of the stock weapons of Catholic polemic. In the course of the seventeenth century, however, it found belief here and there, even among Protestants, who were not satisfied with the bare information of Mathesius, ed. Loesche (Prague 1906), p. 16 : "Hans Luther moved from the village of Möhra to Eisleben," and who felt it necessary to hunt up the most impressive motive possible for this departure. At the turn of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries people in Möhra knew exactly how the alleged murder happened. Hans Luther, the tale ran, had accidentally killed a peasant in a field with his own horse-bridle. How he managed to do this no one troubled to wonder, *cf.* the essay of the mine official, J. M. Michaelis, on the Kupfersuhl mines, written in 1702, in Von Thon, *Schloss Wartburg*, p. 143 f. In quite modern times the inhabitants of Möhra were able to point out the very meadow in which this happened. The obvious objection that if Hans Luther had been guilty of such an action he would not have chosen the Mansfeld district but would rather have fled across the border, which was very close, into Hesse, where the Saxon courts could not have interfered with him, was ignored ; so also was the very surprising fact that the supposed man-slayer, no later than 1491, was appointed to the very honourable office of one of the "four of the commonalty," whose duty was to uphold the rights of the citizens as opposed to the Council, C. Krumhaar, *Versuch einer Geschichte von Stadt und Schloss Mansfeld* (1869), p. 26. The story thus has as legendary a flavour as possible. But there must be *something* in it. And there is in fact something in it. Hans Luther had a younger brother whose name was also Hans. For it was formerly the custom in the Thuringian districts bordering Hesse, as it still is in Hesse itself, for the *Gode* or god-father to give the child his name. Consequently in Thuringia, as to-day in Hesse, the same name sometimes occurs twice among the children of one family. In Hesse the children are distinguished in such cases by giving them different nicknames (*e.g.* Käthe and Trinchen for Katharina). In the family of Heine Luther of Möhra a still simpler method was adopted: the elder Hans, Luther's father, was called Gross-Hans and the younger Klein-Hans. Klein-Hans later followed Gross-Hans to Mansfeld; for Gross-Hans kept up a communication and intercourse with his relations in Möhra, a fact which also does not speak for the credibility of the later Möhra legend. But Klein-Hans did no good in Mansfeld, as the still existing law-court records of 1499–1513 show, *cf.* W. Möllenberg in the *Zeitung des Harz-Vereins für Geschichte und Altertumskunde* xxxix. (1906), p. 191 ff. He was a rowdy fellow, a tavern hero of the worst sort, and very ready with his knife. The records do not, indeed, state that he ever killed a man. They show only that he once cut a man on the mouth, another time injured several people on the hands (with a knife), a third time struck a severe blow with a knife at a man's head from behind, and a fourth time gave a man a violent blow on the head with a stick. All this makes it quite plausible to attribute a fatal blow to him. These misdeeds of Klein-Hans Luther were still the subject of much discussion in Eisleben at the time when Georg Witzel was summoned by Count Hoyer of Mansfeld as pastor for the ever-shrinking Catholic community. It is possible that in the little community the story was already told as Witzel, who is known to have seized upon any gossip about

Luther's family, reproduces it. It is alternatively not impossible that Witzel, who can hardly have known of the existence of two Hans Luthers in Mansfeld, quite honestly attributed to Gross-Hans the deeds told of Klein-Hans. In any case, the alleged manslaughter by Gross-Hans is as credible as the story told in the same breath, probably also originating in the embittered little Catholic community in Eisleben, that the heretic Martinus was begotten by an incubus or devil in adultery with "Margarethe Lutherin."

APPENDIX D

THE URSULA LEGEND (see p. 26).

LUTHER never mentions Ursula, nor yet Kunz Cotta. In his earliest letter, of April 22, 1507, he only names the Schalbes as people to whom he is particularly indebted (*Schalbense collegium optimos illos homines de me certe quam optime meritos*, Correspondence, i. 3. The term *collegium* is mysterious. Rebhaus' interpretation—"the Franciscan monastery under the Wartburg"—is as impossible as Kolde's "the Schalbes as collators of this monastery." A monastery is never referred to as a college, and never named after people who have particularly devoted themselves to it. Nor were there ever collators of a begging monastery. It is probably a case of an old corruption of the text which it will probably never be possible to remedy; in 1531 he speaks of Heinrich Schalbe expressly as his host, *hospes*, *Werke*, xxx. 3, 491, l. 35). Lastly, according to the best of all his listeners, Georg Rörer, he once related that he first begged his bread in the streets of Eisenach, but afterwards was taken in by Henricianus, in return for which he had to take the latter's son to school, *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte*, v. 365. It is generally recognised that this can only refer to Heinrich Schalbe and his son, Kaspar, with whom Luther had intercourse later also (Correspondence, iv. 1 f., of March 1, 1523, *ibid.* v. 366

of July 3, *Werke*, Erlangen ed., liv. 50, of November 15, Correspondence, v. 409 of November 26, 1526, and *Werke*, Erlangen ed., liii. 398, of March 1, 1527). That he also knew the Cottas is proved by the letter to his "good worthy, prudent friends" Friedrich and Bonaventura, concerning their brother and cousin Heinrich Cotta, who was then (Nov. 10, 1541) staying with him in Wittenberg (Correspondence, xiv. 113). But it is in Ratzeberger, p. 43 (1555), that the information first appears that he had "board and lodging in Eisenach with Cuntz Cotten." It goes without saying that Ratzeberger did not make this up out of his head. But he often made mistakes, slight or serious, and this passage is certainly erroneous in so far as it does not say that Luther at first begged his bread in Eisenach as a *Partekenhengst*. It is not justifiable to prefer his information to Luther's definite statement. As so often, we must reckon with his inaccuracy. Luther, no doubt, talked about Kunz Cotta, who was closely related to the Schalbes. For Ursula Cotta was a Schalbe by birth. From this Ratzeberger afterwards mistakenly concluded that Kunz Cotta was Luther's host in Eisenach. If we keep to Luther's own information we must believe that he first begged his bread in Eisenach as a *Partekenhengst*, and later Heinrich Schalbe took him into his house, in return for which he looked after Heinrich's son, Kaspar Schalbe, a schoolboy three or four years younger than himself. In this case one would naturally take the unnamed matron who took such a fancy to the lad Luther on account of his fervent singing and praying, according to Mathesius, p. 17, to be Frau Schalbe. Nikolaus Selnecker (*Historia Lutheri*, 1575) and Matthias Dresser (*Historia Lutheri*, 1584, 1590) make no mention of Ursula. I gather from Scheel's information, i. 102 ff., that she first appears in the manuscript chronicle of the Eisenach Superintendent, Nikolaus Rebhan (written 1620), to which I have not had access. She is mentioned briefly in the *Historia Isonacensis* of the notorious but very influential forger Chr. Franz Paullini, *cf.* his *Syntagma* (Frankfurt, 1698), p. 125, and on Paullini's forgeries, W. Wattenbach, *Deutsch-*

lands Geschichtsquellen, i. (7), 15. Later writers are directly or indirectly dependent on Paullini, even that learned authority and editor of Luther's works, J. Georg Walch.

APPENDIX E

LUTHER'S DEATH (see p. 27).

I HAVE followed the information of Landau in Strieder, *loc. cit.* p. 36 f., and the explanations of the Prague Professor of Medicine, Tschermak, in taking the cause of Luther's death to be a paralytic stroke. Now, as already suggested by Küchenmeister and Ebstein, the diagnosis of heart failure has been offered with greater probability by Doctors Krause-Berlin and Hennicke-Zerbst, *cf.* Christof Schubart, *Die Berichte über Luther's Tod und Begräbnis* (Weimar, 1917), pp. 114 ff. The main proof is the fact that Luther was fully conscious up to the moment of death. Schubart, on pp. 122 f., also discusses Luther's last words. He points out that the reformer, in speaking "before he began to be silent" the last words of the Saviour: *in manus tuas commendo spiritum meum*, followed a mediaeval *Sterbekunst*, *i.e.* the well-known interrogatory for the dying by Anselm of Canterbury, which he had learned thoroughly. The last words which he spoke before this verse of the Bible ran more or less: "I depart in peace and joy. God bless you all." Justus Jones, in his sermon on the afternoon of February 19 in St. Andrew's Church, Eisleben, concluded by referring to a prophecy of Luther's: "*Pestis eram vivens moriens ero mors tua, Papa*," *ibid.* p. 18, and Bugenhagen on February 22 in Wittenberg employed the same line as "the epitaph and prophecy which Luther had made himself," *ibid.* p. 37. But neither of them suggest at all that the line was composed by Luther only in Eisleben. Ratzeberger, much later, is the first to state this; he was not present at Eisleben and deserves no more credence here than in the other unsupported information he gives. Schubart, pp. 137 ff., gives a summary of the literature on Luther's death. Already between 1546 and 1591 there appeared twenty-six works by Catholic polemics and about forty from the evangelical side concerned with this theme. Thomas Bozio's book, *De signis ecclesiae* (Rome, 1591), the first literary representation of the legend of Luther's suicide, called forth a lively dispute on Luther's death, which continued till about 1688. The Protestants contributed nine, the Catholic polemics twenty-six works. The dispute was set in motion again only in 1889 by Majunke, but Majunke was refuted so thoroughly by Nikolaus Paulus in 1896 that the *Lügende* has seldom ventured to show itself in literature since. B. Grabinski, *Wie ist Luther gestorben?* (Paderborn, 1910), is the last literary specimen of this genus.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

General

More detailed information in the *Theologische Jahresbericht*, the *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* (*Z. K. G.*), and *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* (*A. R.*). A chronological list of all Luther's writings by Kawerau is in the *Schriften des Vereins für Reformationsgeschichte*, No. 129 (1917).

Recent studies :—Theodor Brieger, *Die Reformation*, Berlin, 1914. Imbart de la Tour, *Les Origines de la Réforme*, vol. iii., Paris, 1914 ; *cf.* also G. von Below, *Die Ursachen der Reformation* (2), Munich, 1917.

The page numbers below refer to the passages upon which the works cited bear.

Chapter I.—The Old Conception of Luther and the Development of Research.

p. 1 ; *cf.* the historically much more faithful sketches of Rietschl in the Albertinum, Dresden. An iconography (*Geschichte des Lutherbildes*) has been projected by H. H. Borcherdt in the supplementary volume to the Munich edition of Luther, and by Julius Vogel, director of the Leipzig Museum.

p. 4 ; *cf. Dürer's Nachlass*, edited by Lange and Fuhse, p. 66.

p. 5 ; *cf.* E. G. Vogel, *Bibliotheca biographica Lutherana*, 1851. Horst Stephan, *Luther in den Wandlungen seiner Kirche*, Giessen, 1907. Fr. Loofs, *Die Jahrhundertfeier der Reformation an den Universitäten Wittenberg und Halle, 1617, 1717 und 1917*, in *Z. K. G. der Provinz Sachsen*, xiii. (1917). Eckart, *Luther im Urteil berühmter Männer*, 1918. *Cf.* Fr. Nietzsche, *Der Antichrist*, ch. 61. E. Tröltsch in *Die Kultur der Gegenwart*, part 1, section 4.

p. 14 ; *cf.* W. Zimmerman, *Geschichte des Bauernkrieges*, 1841. Barge, *Karlstadt*, 1904–5. K. Ecke, *Schwenckfeld*, 1911. Joh. Cochlaeus, *Commentaria de actis M. Lutheri*, 1549. Th. Murner, *An den Adel*, 1521. Joh. Pistorius, *Anatomia Lutheri*, 1615.

p. 18 ; N. Weislinger, *Friss, Vogel, oder Stirb*, 1723. Eusebius Engelhard, *Lucifer Wittenbergensis*, 1747. Further information in Ottomar Hegemann's *Luther im katholischen Urteil*, Munich, 1905.

p. 26 ; on his brother, see *A. R.* v. p. 365 ; on the place of baptism, Grössler in *Mansfelder Blätter*, xvii, p. 179; on the St. George's Hostel, O. Clemen, *Beiträge zur Reformationsgeschichte*, ii. p. 3; on Konrad Hutter, *ibid.*, ii. p. 1.

p. 27; on Luther's suicide, *cf.* also Nik. Paulus, *Luther's Lebensende*, Freiburg 1898, and Appendix E.

p. 28; *cf.* Karl Müller in *Philotesia zu Paul Kleinert's 70. Geburtstag*, Berlin, 1907.

p. 29; *cf.* also Arnold Berger, *Die Kulturaufgaben der Reformation* (2).

CHAPTER II.—THE EVOLUTION OF THE REFORMER.

Cf. in general Otto Scheel's *Martin Luther*, Tübingen, 1917, vols. i. and ii. and my observations in *Studien und Kritiken*, 1918. Theodor Th. Neubauer, *Luther's Frühzeit, Jahrbücher der Akademie der gemeinnützigen Wissenschaften*, Erfurt, xliii. (1917).

p. 32. One of these letters, to one of his teachers in Eisenach (invitation to his first Mass) of April 28, 1507, has only recently been discovered by J. Degering, *cf. Zentralblatt für Bibliothekswesen*, xxxiii. (1916), p. 88, No. 16. The other two letters there attributed to Luther (p. 78, No. 3, September 5, 1501, and p. 84, No. 13, of February 23, 1503) are not his; *cf.* also *Z. K. G.*, xxxvi. p. 507 ff. The authenticity of the April 28th letter also seems to me more than doubtful. The style is considerably different from the genuine letter of April 22nd, Corr. i. 1, the paucity of matter in comparison with this very striking, and the signature also arouses misgivings. The letter is thus probably, like so many letters of the Codex, a mere exercise in style.

p. 33; *cf.* also the very powerful manuscript marginal glosses to the *Marienpsalter* of Markus von Weida in the Jena University Library, ed. Kawerau in *Studien und Kritiken*, 1917, p. 81–87. The Psalter was printed in 1515. This only proves, however, that the date of the glosses is later than 1515. They are so strongly anti-Catholic that they should, in my opinion, be assigned to a considerably later period.

p. 35; Luther's *Römervorlesung*, edited by Joh. Ficker, *Anfänge reformatorische Schriftauslegung*, vol. i., in 2 parts, Leipzig, 1908. The marginal notes in *Werke*, vol. ix., sermons in vols. i. and iv. K. A. Meissinger, *Luther's Exegese in der Frühzeit*, Leipzig, 1911.

p. 39; *cf.* Boehmer, *Luther's Romfahrt*, Leipzig, 1914, also in *Neue Kirchliche Zeitung*, xxiv. 411 f. Eekhof in *Nederl Archief vor Kerkgeschiedenis*, xii. 1 ff.

p. 52. Very convenient summaries of the various articles of Occamistic theology are available in Joh. Altensteig's *Lexicon Theologicum, editio Veneta*, 1563—one of the chief sources used by Father Denifle; *cf.* also Prantl, *Geschichte der Logik im Abendlande*, vol. iii. p. 4; Maurice de Wulf, *Histoire de la Philosophie Mediévale* (2), 1905, p. 449 ff.; H. Hermelink, *Die theologische Fakultät in Tübingen vor der Reformation*, Tubingen, 1906; O. Scheel, *loc. cit.*, pp. 170–215, 284–293; ii. 75 ff.; 104 ff.; 173 ff.; 298 ff.; W. Braun, *Die Konkupiszenz in Luther's Leben und Lehre*, Berlin, 1908. J. Ficker in the Introduction to the edition of Luther's *Vorlesung über den Römerbrief*, lxvii. ff. A. W. Hunzinger, *Lutherstudien*, vol. i., Leipzig, 1906. Fr. Loofs, *Dogmengeschichte* (4), 1906, p. 685 ff., also in *Studien und Kritiken*, 1911, p. 461 ff. Hermann Büttner, *Das Büchlein vom volkommenen Leben*, Jena, 1907, Introduction. Karl Stange in *Neue kirchl. Zeitschrift*, xvii. (1906), p. 661 ff. H. Mandel, *Die scholastikische Rechtfertigungslehre, ihre Bedeutung für Luther's Entwicklung*, thesis, Griefswald, 1906; also in the edition of the *Deutsche Theologie*, Leipzig, 1908, Introduction. Alphons Victor Müller, *Luther's theologische Quellen*, Giessen, 1912; *cf.* Grabmann in the *Katholik*, xciii. p. 151 ff. K. Holl, *Luther's Rechtfertigungslehre, Ztschr. für Theol. und Kirche*, 1910. O. Scheel, *Die Entwicklung Luthers, Schriften Ver. Ref-Geschichte*, No. 100; also *Dokumente zu Luthers Entwicklung*, Tübingen, 1911, *Luthers Rückblick auf seine Bekehrung* in *Ztschr. für Theol. und Kirche*, 1911, and *Ausschnitte aus dem Leben des jungen Luther*, *Z. K. G.*, 1911 f. O. Ritschl., *Luther's Entwicklung*, in the *Internationale Wochenschrift*, 1910; also *Dogmengeschichte des Protestantismus*, vols. i. and ii. L. Cristiani, *Du Luthéranisme au Protestantisme, thèse de Clermont*, Paris, 1911. R. Seeberg, *Die Lehre Luthers* (*Dogmengesch.* vol. iv., 1917); *cf.* also W. Köhler in *Z. K. G.*, xxxvii. 16 ff.

p. 73; *cf. Theol. Literaturblatt*, xxxviii. p. 138 ff., and my article in connection with this in *Neue kirchl. Ztschr.*, 1918, with bibliography. H. von Schubert, *Luther's Frühentwicklung, Schr. Ver. für Ref. Gesch.*, No. 124.

p. 84; Kampschulte, *Die Universität Erfurt*, ii. (1860), p. 31 ff. W. Köhler, *Luther's Schrift an den Adel im Spiegel der Kultur- und Zeitgeschichte*, 1895. Meltzer, *Luther als deutscher Mann*, 1905. O. Scheel, *Martin Luther*, i. 217 ff.; ii. 67 ff. Meissinger, p. 61 ff.

CHAPTER III.—THE EVOLUTION OF THE REFORMATION.

General survey: Paul Kalkoff, *Luther und die Entscheidungsjahre der Reformation*, Munich, 1917; *cf.* also V. Friedensburg, *Gesch. der Universität Wittenberg*, Halle, 1917.

p. 90. On the printing of the 95 theses, O. Clemen in the *Festschrift für Brieger*, Leipzig, 1912.

p. 91. On the indulgence, A. Gottlob, *Kreuzablass und Almosenablass* in *Kirchenrechtl. Abhdl.* by Ulrich Stutz, Nos. 30, 31. H. Boehmer in *Studien und Kritiken*, 1913, p. 266 ff.

p. 98. On the Mainz indulgence, A. Schulte, *Die Fugger in Rom.*, 2 vols., Leipzig, 1904; *cf.* G. Brom in *Bijdragen van het hist. Genootschap te Utrecht*, 1911, p. 407 ff.

p. 104; *cf.* Karl Müller in *Z. K. G.*, xxiv., Paul Kalkoff in *Z. K. G.*, xxv., xxxi., xxxii., xxxiii., xxxv., xxxvii., in *Hist. Vierteljahrsschr.*, xviii. 265 ff., also in *A. R.*, xiii. 249 ff. (where there is a complete bibliography), in *Die Entstehung des Wormser Edikts*, Leipzig, 1913, and in *Zur Entstehung des Wormser Edikts*, *A. R.*, xiii. p. 241 ff.

p. 119. Kalkoff, *Die Depeschen des Nuntius Aleander* (2), Halle, 1897.

p. 120. On the burning of the Bull, *cf.* Boehmer in *Neue Kirchl Ztschr.*, xxiv. 399 f.

p. 122; *cf.* H. von Schubert in *Heidelberger Sitsungsberichte*, 1912, No. 6, *Deutsche Reichstagsakten unter Karl V*, vol. ii. Selection in Johannes Kühn, *Luther und der Wormser Reichstag* in Voigtländer's Source-books, No. 73.

p. 124. Glapion, *cf. Z. K. G.*, ii. p. 124 ff.

p. 133. H. Barge, *Karlstadt*, 2 vols, Leipzig,, 1904–5; also in *Histor. Ztschr.*, xcix. p. 256 ff., *Hist. Vierteljahrschr.*, xi. p. 193 ff.; 296 ff. *Gemeindechristentum in Wittenberg und Orlamünde*, Leipzig, 1909; *Aktenstücke zur Wittenberger Bewegung*, Leipzig, 1912; and in *Hist. Vierteljahrsschr.*, 1912, and *Stud. und Krit.*, 1913, p. 461 ff. Karl Müller, *Luther und Karlstadt*, Tübingen, 1907; and *Kirche, Gemeinde, Obrigkeit nach Luther*, Tübingen, 1910. Ulrich Stutz in *Zt. Sav.-Stift für Rechtsgesch. Canonist*, section 1, 309 ff. K. Pallas, *Der Reformationsversuch des Gabriel Didymus in Eilenburg*, in *A. R.*, ix. p. 34 ff., x. p. 51 ff. W. Köhler in *Göttinger Gelehrte Anzeigen*, 1912, p. 505 ff. Nikolaus Müller, *Die Wittenberger Bewegung* (2) (1911); and in *Ztschr. für K.G. der Provinz Sachsen*, xii. p. 9 ff.; 100 ff. on the *Beutelordnung*, *cf.* Pallas, *ibid.*, xiii. p. 1 ff. and Winckelmann in *Hist. Vierteljahrsschr.* xvii. p. 187 ff. The earliest version of the Municipal Ordinance which has come down to us was found by O. Clemen in the Zwickau Library, *cf. Stud. und Krit.*, 1897, p. 820 f. The printed text, published by Lietzmann, *Kleine Texte* No. 21, is very defective. A few letters edited by Boehmer in *Neue Kirchl. Ztschr.*, xxiv. 493 ff.

CHAPTER IV.—LUTHER AS SCHOLAR, ARTIST AND MORALIST; HIS PRIVATE CHARACTER.

p. 157. On Grisar's work, *cf.* Kawerau, *Luther in kath. Beleuchtung, Ver. Ref.-Gesch.*, No. 105. Steinlein in *Neue Kirchl. Ztschr.*, xxii. P. Kalkoff in *A. R.*, viii. 356 f. Kropatschek, *Z. K. G.*, xxxii. p. 299 ff. A. Harnack in *Theol. Literaturztschr.*, May 13, 1911. J. Haussleiter in *Allgem. ev.-luth. K. Z.*, 1912, p. 1041 ff. P. Sinthern (Grisar's collaborator) in *Z. Kath. Th.*, xxxvi. p. 550 ff.

p. 159. O. G. Schmidt, *Luther's Bekanntschaft mit den römischen Klassiken*, 1883; *cf. Z. K. G.*, viii. p. 298 f. Schäfer, *Luther als Kirchen historiker*. W. Köhler, *Luther und die Kirchengeschichte*, 1900. Meissinger, p. 83 ff.

p. 161; *cf.* H. Brenner, *Luther's Handschrift im Lichte der deutschen Schriftentwicklung*, in *Lutherstudien*, Weimar, 1917, p. 66 ff.

p. 163; *cf.* O. Scheel, *Luther*, i. p. 187 ff.; also in *Festschrift für Hauck*, Leipzig, 1915.

p. 166; *cf.* Boehmer, *Luther's Romfahrt.*

p. 168; *cf.* for instance *Dürer's Nachlass*, ed. by Lange, pp. 230, 292 ff., 310 ff.

p. 169; *cf. Sprichwörter, Werke*, Weimar ed., li. 645 ff. *Lieder, Werke*, xxxv. Lucke in *Lutherstudien*, p. 79 ff.
On the air to "*Ein' feste Burg*," W. Bäumker, *Das katholische deutsche Kirchenlied*, i. 21 ff., iv. 691 f.

p. 177. On Aurifaber, Cristiani in *Revue des questions historiques*, xc. p. 470 ff.; xci. p. 101 ff.; xcii. p. 43 6ff. For the Table-Talk in general, *cf.* E. Kroker's edition in the *Werke*, Weimar ed., and his essay in *A. R.*, 5, also *Lutherstudien*, p. 178 ff. (Proof that the collection ascribed to Nikolaus Medler in *Tischreden*, i., is really that of Georg Rörer.)

p. 178. On Veit Dietrich, *cf. ibid.* p. 170 ff.; on Georg Rörer, the most industrious, reliable, and influential of all the note-takers, *ibid.* p. 203 ff.; on Aurifaber, *A. R.*, xii. 155 ff.

p. 186. Fr. Küchenmeister, *Luther's Krankengeschichte*, 1831. Kawerau, *Vom kranken Luther* in *Deutsch-evangelische Blätter*, 1904, vol. xxix. p. 303 ff. Wilhelm Ebstein, *Martin Luther's Krankheiten*, Stuttgart, 1908.

p. 187; *cf.* also Smith, *Luther's Early Development in the Light of Psycho-Analysis* in the American Journal of Psychology, vol. xxiv. (Albany N.Y., Worcester, Mass., 1913).

p. 197. H. Grisar, S.J., *Der Gute Trunk in den Lutheranklagen*, Histor. Jahrbuch, xxvi. p. 479 ff., also published separately. Luther's sermons against drunkenness, *e.g. Werke*, Erlangen ed. (2nd ed.), xxviii. p. 290 ff., xi. p. 322. A. Römer in *Die Alkoholfrage*, xiii. part 2.

p. 201; *cf. Allgemein. Ev.-Luth. Kirchenzeitung*, 1917, p. 207 f.

v. 206. Melancthon's letter in the original was first published by Meyer, *Sitzungsberichte der Münchener Akademie, histor. philolog. Klasse*, 1876, p. 601 ff. A. Kirsch, *Melancthon's Brief über Luther's Heirat an Camerarius*, 1900. The translation is disputable in several places, and a decision often very difficult, *cf.* Walther, *Für Luther*, p. 660 ff. Where the letter can be interpreted more or less favourably to Luther, I have in the text intentionally preferred the less favourable interpretation.

p. 208. The authenticity of the letter to Campegi, which Brieger doubts, is confirmed by Campegi's report to the Curia of July 5, 1530, published by Ehses in the *Röm. Quartalschrift*, xvii. p. 358 ff.

p. 209 f. E. Kroker, *Catharina von Bora*, 1906; also in Lutherstudien (Weimar, 1917), p. 140 ff.; *cf.* also Luther's very characteristic utterance of June 21, 1525 (a week after his his wedding!) Corr. v. 204: *Ego non amo nec aestuo, sed diligo uxorem.*

p. 211. In particular he makes mistakes in numbers. Meissinger, p. 38, refers to a peculiar weakness in the sense of number on his part.

p. 212. On Luther's attitude to lying, *cf.* Grisar, *Histor. Jahrbuch*, 1912–13. In criticism of Grisar, Haussleiter in *Allgem. Ev.-Luth. K. Z.*, 1912, p. 1041 ff. Alphons Victor Müller in *Stud. und Krit.*, 1914. W. Köhler, *Ver. Ref.-Gesch*, p. 109, 110. Rockwell, *Die Doppelehe des Landgrafen Philipp von Hessen*, 1903. Brieger, *Luther und die Nebenehe des Landgrafen von Hessen, Preussische Jahrbücher*, vol. cli. (1909), p. 35 ff.; also *Untersuchungen über Luther und die Nebenehe des Landgrafen Philipp, Ztschr. für Kirchengesch.*, xxix. p. 174 ff. F. Küch, *ibid.*, p. 403 ff. Most of the documents are in M. Lenz, *Briefwechsel Philipps des Grossmütigen mit Butzer*, vol. i., 1880.

p. 221. W. Walther, *Für Luther wider Rom.*, p. 417 ff. Wendelinus de Steinbach, *Supplementum*, 4, p. 18 ff., *cf. Summa angelica sub Confessio ultimo.*

p. 225. W. Walther, *Luthers Charakter* (5), Leipzig, 1916.

p. 229; *cf.* Boehmer, *Loyola*, Bonn, 1914.

p. 235. Four hitherto unknown letters from the time of the Diet of Augsburg are published by W. Köhler in *A. R.*, xiv. 236 ff.

p. 238. Kawerau, *Luther und Melancthon*, in *Deutsch-ev. Blätter*, 1903, xxviii. p. 29 f.

p. 240. The fact that in the negotiations after the conversation the Lutherans proposed a formula of agreement to the Zwinglians does not alter the case (Von Schubart, *Bekenntnisbildung*, p. 96 ff.). For this formula involved no concession from Luther's point of view, *cf. Werke*, xxiii. 145 ff.; xxvi. 339 ff.

CHAPTER V.—THE THINKER AND PROPHET.

Cf. in general, Theodor Harnack, *Luther's Theologie*, Erlangen 1862, 1886. Julius Köstlin, *Luther's Theologie in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung*, 2nd ed. 1901. Harnack, *Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte*, vol. iii. W. Wundt, *Ethik*, i. p. 363 ff. Dilthey in *Archiv. für Geschichte der Philosophie*, v. p. 330 ff. O. Ritschl, *Dogmengeschichte des Protestantismus*, 2 vols., Leipzig, 1908 f. Loofs, *Leitfaden der Dogmengeschichte*, 1906. R. Seeberg, *Die Lehre Luthers* (*D.G.* vol. iv.). L. Ihmels, *Das Christentum Luthers in seiner Eigenart, Leipziger Programm*, 1917. H. Preuss, *Luther's Frömmigkeit*, Leipzig, 1917.

p. 250. Erich Klingner, *Luther und der deutsche Volksaberglaube, Palaestra*, lvi., Berlin, 1912. In criticism of Grisar, Klingner in *A. R.* x. p. 288–9. Grisar's method is used also by N. Paulus, *Hexenwahn und Hexenprozess vornehmlich im 16. Jahrhundert*, Freiburg, 1910—apologetic in the case of Catholics, polemical in that of Protestants.

p. 256. H. Hermelink, *Die religiösen Reformbestrebungen der deutschen Humanisten*, Tübingen, 1906. W. Maurenbecher, *Geschichte der katholischen Reformation*, Nördlingen, 1880. M. Lenz, *Kleine Histor. Schriften*, pp. 87 f., 125. K. Weizsäcker in *Göttinger Gelehrte Anzeigen*, 1881, p. 839. Paul Mestwerdt, *Die Anfänge des Erasmus* (*Studien zur Kultur und Geschichte der Reformation*, vol. ii., Halle, 1917). Paul Althaus in the *Leipziger Universitätsprogramm*, 1914. A. Freytag in *Werke*, Weimar ed., xviii. p. 351 ff. M. Richter, *Desiderius Erasmus und seine Stellung zu Luther auf Grand ihrer Schriften*, Leipzig, 1907. Karl Zickendraht, *Der Streit zwischen Erasmus und Luther uber die Willensfreiheit*, Leipzig, 1909, *cf.* also Durand de Laur, *Erasme, précurseur et initiateur de l'esprit moderne*, Paris, 1872. R. B. Drummond, *Erasmus, his Life and Character*, London, 1873, Kawerau in *Deutsch-ev. Blätter*, 1906, p. 12 ff., Von Bezold, *Deutsche Geschichte*, p. 228 ff. Of Erasmus' works, the most relevant are the *Enchiridion* (1502), *Novum Testamentum* (1516), *Colloquia familiaria*, in particular the *Convivium religiosorum* in the Rome edition of 1522, *cf. Bibliotheca Erasmiana*, edited by the University of Ghent. On Erasmus' character, *cf.* the article Georg Witzel, *Realenzyklopädie*, xxi. p. 399 ff. Wernle, *Die Renaissance des Christentums*, 1904; also *Renaissance und Reformation*, Tübingen, 1912. Dilthey *loc. cit.*, p. 107.

p. 257. On Marcus con Weida, see Paulus in *Ztschr. für Theol.*, xxvi. p. 251. *Michaelsapokalypse*, *cf.* Haupt, *Ein oberrheinischer Revolutionär aus dem Zeitalter Maximilians* I, *Westdeutsche Ztschr.*, supplem., vol. viii., 1893. Sebastian Brant, *Narrenschiff*, Kap. 105, consistently misquoted by Dilthey, *loc. cit.* and others.

p. 267 f.; *cf.* Thieme, *Die sittliche Triebkraft des Glaubens*, 1895. Kapp, *Religion und Moral im Christentum Luthers*, 1902. Eger, *Die Anschauung Luthers vom Beruf*, 1900. Max Weber, *Die Protestantische Ethik und der Geist des Kapitalismus* in *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft*, vol. xxi. p. 35 ff.

p. 270. E. Tröltsch in *Kultur der Gegenwart*, i. 4; also *Die Sociallehren der christlichen Kirche* (vol. i. of his collected works). *Cf.* Paul Wernle in *Ztschr. für und Kirche*, xxii. and xxiii. On asceticism, *cf. Theol. Literaturblatt* xxxviii. (1917), p. 141 ff. W. Walther, *Das Erbe der Reformation und die Kirche* (1917) no longer used.

p. 273. Charles Beard, *The Reformation of the* 16*th Century*, London, 1906.

p. 273. Richard Scholz, *Die Publizistik in Zeitalter Philipps des Schönen und Bonifaz' VIII*, 1903. R. Seeberg, *Die Theologie des Johannes Duns Skotus*, 1900. O. Clemen, *Johann Pupper von Goch*, *Leipziger Studien zur Geschichte*, ii., 1896. K. Heim, *Das Gewissheitsproblem in der system. Theologie*, Leipzig, 1911, p. 220 ff. (pure construction).

p. 287. Frank G. Ward's study and appreciation of Luther's views on the State and its economic functions in Conrad's *Sammlung nationalökon. Abhdl.*, vol. xxi., 1898. Erich Brandenburg, *Luther's Anschauungen vom Staat und von der Gesellschaft*, *Schriften des Vereins für Reformationsgeschichte*, 1901. G. Jäger, *Politische Ideen Luthers und ihre Einfluss auf die innere Entwicklung Deutschlands*, Preuss. Jahrbücher, 1903.

G. von Schulthess-Rechberg in *Zürcher Beiträge zur Rechtswissenschaft*, No. 24. K. Holl, *Luther und das landegherrliche Kirchen regiment* in *Ztschr. für Theol. und Krit.* xxi. (1911).

p. 291. Karl Rieker, *Die evangelische Kirche in Deutschland in ihrer rechtlichen Stellung*, 1893. Th. Brieger, *Die kirchliche Gewalt der Obrigkeit nach der Anschauung Luthers, Ztschr. für Theol. und Kirche*, ii. p. 513 ff. B. Bess, *Luther und das landesherrliche Kirchenregiment*, 1894. Rudolf Zieschang, *Die Anfänge eines landesherrlichen Kirchenregiments in Sachsen im Mittelalter* (*Beiträge zur sächs. K.G.*, xxiii. 1. 1909). Nik. Paulus, *Luther und die Gewissensfreiheit*, "*Glaube und Wissen*," part iv., 1905; also in *Histor. polit. Blätter*, cvl. pp. 277 ff., 248 ff.; and *Protestantismus und Toleranz*, Freiburg, 1911. P. Wappler, *Inquisition und Ketzerprozess in Zwickau*, Leipzig, 1908; also in Greving's *Reformationsgesch. Studien*, No. xiii.–xiv., *cf.* W. Neuser, *Hans Hut*, 1914. K. Sachsse, *Hubmaier als Theologe*, 1914. Karl Völker, *Toleranz und Intoleranz im Zeitalter der Reformation*, Leipzig, 1912.

CHAPTER VI.—DIRECT AND INDIRECT EFFECTS UPON THE CIVILISATION OF THE AGE.

p. 302; *cf.* in general, Karl Müller, *Grundriss der Kirchengesch.* ii. 2, p. 11 ff. Here also bibliography of the principal works.

p. 303; *cf. Werke*, the German Bible, 3 vols. at present published. Only here does one gain a correct impression of the work done by Luther and his collaborators in the course of the translation. *Cf.* O. Reichert in *Lutherstudien*, p. 203 ff. W. Walther, *Luthers deutsche Bibel*, Berlin, 1917; also in *Neue kirchl. Ztschr.*, vol. xxvii.

p. 315. On the number of churches, clergy and members of convents, *cf.* O. R. Redlich, *Jülich-Bergische Kirchen-politik*, i. 226 f. Gerhard Kallen, *loc. cit.*, p. 270. Lossen, *Kölnischer Krieg*, i. 155 ff. Myconius, *Hist. Reform.*, p. 7. Karl Müller, Grundriss, ii. 283. Janssen, *Gesch. des deutschen Volkes*, i. 703 ff.

p. 319; *cf.* Boehmer, *Gustav Adolf*, Stockholm, 1918.

p. 321; on the state of morality in Italy, *cf.* Buschbell, *Reformation und Inquisition in Italien*, Paderborn, 1916, p. 1 ff. Boehmer, *Loyola*, p. 177 ff.; in Spain, Astrain, *Historia de la Compañia de Jesús en la Asistencia de España*, i. (Introduction); in France, Imbart de la Tour, *Les Origines*, ii, p. 182 ff.; in Germany, Janssen-Pastor, i. p. 706 ff. Acts of the visitation to Jülich and Ravensberg of 1533 in Cornelius, *Münsterscher Aufruhr*, i. p. 225 ff.; of the Cologne Council of 1536 in Hartzheim, *Concilia Germ.*, vi. p. 235. Riezler, *Gesch. Bayerns*, vols. iv.–vi. Oskar Mayer, *Studien zur Vorgesch. der Reformation, Hist. Bibliothek*, xiv. On the excessive number of beggars, *cf.* G. Uhlhorn, *Gesch. der Christlichen Liebestätigkeit* (1st ed.), vol. ii.

p. 322. For the statistical method, *cf.* Tschackert in *Z. K. G.*, xxi. p. 330 ff. Joseph Löhr, *Methodisch-kritische Beiträge zur Gesch. der Sittlichkeit des Klerus* (*Ref. gesch. Studien und Texte*, No. 17). For documents, *cf. Westdeutsche Zeitschr.*, xxxiii. p. 102 ff. *Annalen des Hist. Vereins für den Niederrhein*, lxv. p. 151 ff. Imbart ii. 182 ff.

p. 325; *cf.* L. Schauenburg, 100 *Jahre Oldenburgischer Kirchengeschichte*, vols. iii.–v.

p. 326. Cardauns, *Die Lehre vom Widerstandrechte des Volkes im Luthertum und Calvinismus*, 1903. K. Müller in *Munchener S.-B.*, 1915, 8.

p. 329. O. Albrecht in *Werke*, Weimer ed., xv. p. 9 ff.

p. 332. Müllenhoff and Scherer, *Denkmäler deutscher Poesie und Prosa*, 2nd ed., p. xxviii. ff. Heinrich Rückert, *Geschichte der deutschen Sprache*, vol. ii., 1875. Scherer, *Zur Gesch. der deutschen Sprache*, 2nd ed., p. 13 f. Paul Pietsch, *Martin Luther und die hochdeutsche Schriftsprache*, 1883. Friedrich Kluge, *Von Luther bis Lessing, Sprachgeschichtliche Aufsätze*, 4th ed., 1904. Edward Schröder in *Göttinger Gelehrt. Anzeigen*, 1888, i. 249 ff. Konrad Burdach, *Die Einigung der neuhochdeutschen Schriftsprache*, 1884; also *Zum Ursprung der neuhochdeutschen Schriftsprache, Abhandlungen der Berliner Akademie*, 1903 ff. Wülker in *Germania*, xxviii. p. 191 ff. Carl Francke, *Grundzüge der Schriftsprache Luthers*, vol. i., 1913. Lagarde in *Göttinger Gelehrt. Anzeigen*, 1885, ii.

p. 339. Friedrich Lepp, *Schlagwörter des Reformationszeitalters* (*Quellen und Schriften aus der Gesch. des Reformationsjahrhunderts*, No. 8), pp. 3 ff., 53.

p. 343; *cf.* W. James, *A Pluralistic Universe* (1909), p. 305 ff.

INDEX OF PERSONAL NAMES

Aaron 259
Abraham 214
Accolti, Cardinal Benedetto 112*n*, 115, 116
Adrian of Utrecht, Cardinal 115
Aesop 159, 169, 200
Agricola 316
Ailly, de 52, 53, 62, 160
Alberti, Leone Battista 263
Albrecht V, Duke of Bavaria 198
—— von Brandenburg, Margrave, Cardinal Archbishop of Mainz 99*n*., 100, 101, 103, 104, 105, 188, 356
Aldegrever, Heinrich 346
Aleander 119, 121, 125, 127, 128, 129, 188
Alexander II, Pope 92
—— VI, Pope 99
—— of Hales 95
Altdorfer, Albert 345
Alveld 181
Amberger 4
Ambrose 160
Amsdorf, Professor 147, 209
Andreas 203
Anhalt, Adolf von 354
—— Joachim von 182
Anne, Saint 138, 352
Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury 160, 361
Antony, Saint 325
Apel, Dr. 206
Apollonia, Saint 7, 325
Aristotle 36, 72, 160, 163
Arndt 11
Arnemann 346
Athanasius 160
Audin 17
Augustine, Saint 36, 46, 47, 59, 61, 64, 67, 69, 70, 78, 79, 84, 160, 161, 165, 191, 200, 212, 245, 284, 288, 300, 354
Aurifaber, Johann 177

Bach, Johann Sebastian 187
Baltzer 11
Barge, H. 14, 61, 62, 133, 136, 138
Barnikol, Ernst 351
Bartolomeo, Fra 263
Basil of Caesarea 230
Baumgärtner, Hieronymus 208, 209
Bembo, Cardinal 188
Bengel, Albrecht 7
Berg, Franz 16
Berger, Arnold 29
Berlichingen 19
Bernard, Saint, of Clairvaux 53, 54, 57, 61, 67, 68, 70–3, 79, 160, 195
Bernhardi, Bartholomäus 139, 355
Berthold von Mainz, Archbishop 187
Besold, Hieronymus 177
Bezold 346
Biel, Gabriel 52, 53, 57, 58, 62, 64, 65, 72, 78, 160
Biereye, Joh. 352, 353
Bink, Jakob 346
Bismarck 14, 50, 195, 258
Blaise, Saint 325
Blankenfeld, Dr. 100
Blos 14
Blücher 11
Bode 347
Boehmer 190*n*., 354, 355
Boleyn, Anne 214

Bonaventura 53, 67, 160, 360
Boniface VIII, Pope 94, 273, 289
—— IX, Pope 94
Boos, H. 315*n.*
Bora, Florian von 231
——, Katherina von 183, 197, 206, 208, 209, 237, 238, 251, 346, 358
Borgia, Cesare 13, 188, 263
Börner, Friedrich 349
Botticelli, Sandro 263
Bozio, Thomas 27*n.*, 362
Bramante 167
Brant, Sebastian 258, 263
Braun 61, 353
Brenne, O. 169*n.*
Brück, Chancellor 124, 201*n.*
Bucer, Martin 127
Buch, Dr. N. 182
Bücher 315*n.*
Buchholzer 307
Buchwald, G. 33, 353
Bugenhagen 234, 361
Büttner 61
Butzer 214, 216, 217, 221, 240, 303

Cajetan, Cardinal 86, 106, 108–10, 114, 173, 214, 220
Calixtus III, Pope 95
Calvin 31, 136, 162, 191, 195, 241, 247, 248, 303–6, 311, 325, 327
Camerarius 206
Campegi, Papal Legate 208
Capito 214, 261
Carlowitz, Von 208, 253*n.*
Carvajal, Bernadino 115
Cassian 212
Cassiodorus 160
Catullus 159
Cellarius 273
Charlemagne 14
Charles V of Spain, Emperor (1519–1558) 89, 112, 113, 122–9, 188, 198, 345
Chièvres, de 123
Chrysostom 212
Cicero 159, 169, 259
Claaij, Nicasius 144
Clemen, O. 352
Clement VI, Pope 95
Cochlaeus *See* Dobneck
Colet, John 256, 259
Cölius, M. 348, 351
Constantine, Emperor 87
Contarini, Gasparo 112, 229
Copernicus 80, 164
Cordatus, Konrad 46*n.*, 176, 178, 203
Cornaro, Cardinal 188
Cotta, Heinrich 360
—— Kunz 26, 359, 360
—— Ursula 352, 359, 360
Cranach, Hans 346
—— Lukas Müller von 2–5, 179, 185, 196, 206, 344, 345, 347
—— Lukas von (the younger) 2, 3, 347–9
Crotus Rubeanus 62, 84, 86, 181
Cureus, Joachim 356
Cyprian, S. 20, 160

Demosthenes 169, 207
Denck, Hans 24
Denifle, Father Heinrich 17, 19, 24, 49, 51, 59, 61, 62, 63, 157, 158, 159, 160, 199, 205, 206, 210, 211, 226*n.*
Diedenhofen, Prior Winand von 353
Dietrich, Veit 177, 178
—— von Bern 169
Dionysius Areopagitica 67, 68, 76, 78, 160
Dobneck, Johann (Cochlaeus) 15, 24, 40, 181, 182, 189, 190, 210, 214

Döllinger 17, 18, 283
Drachstädt, Dr. 348
Dresser, Matthias 360
Ducange, 174
Duns Scotus 64, 160, 272, 273, 274
Dürer, Albrecht 4, 6, 168, 181

Eberlin von Günzburg 188, 316
Ebstein 361
Eck, Dr. 24, 66, 90, 115, 116, 117, 119, 181, 198, 251
Eckhart, Master 337
Ehwald 169*n.*
Eichendorff 16
Einsiedd, Privy Councillor 149
Eisenach, Oswald von 151
Eisermann, Dr. 147
Eisleben 26, 27*n.*, 48
Elizabeth of England, Queen 180
—— of Saxony, Duchess 215
Emser 24, 181, 182
Enders 190*n.*, 191, 226*n.*, 294*n.*, 295*n.*, 307*n.*, 344, 347, 351, 352
Erasmus of Rotterdam 8, 12, 16, 24, 25, 35, 88, 123, 124, 129, 160, 161, 181, 208, 239, 256, 257, 258, 259, 260, 261, 262, 263, 317
Erasmus, Saint 325
Erlangen 351, 354, 356
Ernst, Elector of Saxony (1482–1486) 106*n.*
Esche, Johann 169*n.*
Eugene III, Pope 93
Eusebius 160, 161

Faber 34, 35*n.*, 59
Falk 315*n.*
Fallersleben, Hoffman von 203
Faust, Dr. 251
Fechner, Hans 5
Feldkirch, Professor 149
Ferrante of Naples 263
Ficino, Marsilio 35, 256, 259
Ficker, Johannes 61
Filelfo, 159
Flacius *See* Matthias
Flechsig, Eduard 344, 345
Florian, Saint 325
Förstemann, G. 348, 351, 356
Fortenagel, Master Lucas 348, 349, 350
—— Jörg 349
Fracastoro 188
Francis I of France 112, 188
Francis of Assissi 231
Franck, Sebastian 24, 25, 247
Francke, August Hermann 83
Franklin, Benjamin 229
Frederick the Great 8, 10
Freytag, Gustav 242
Friedländer 347
Friedrich II of Prussia 213
—— III, Emperor (1440–1493), 335
—— the Quarrelsome 106*n.*
—— der Weise, Elector of Saxony (1486–1525) 38, 85, 102, 106*n.*, 111, 121, 123–6, 140, 143, 150, 151, 169*n.*, 233, 334, 335, 346
Fugger 99, 100, 101

Gabriel, Saint 92, 252, 293
Gansfort, Wessel 76
Geiler of Kaiserberg 180
Georg of Saxony, Duke 38, 133
Gerhard of Zutphen 53, 67
Gerson 53, 160
Ghinucci, Hieronymus 107
Glapion, Jean 124, 127, 128
Glatz 209, 237
Goch 76
Göde, Henning 121
Goethe 10, 50, 197

Gottlob, Adolf 91
Grabinski, B. 362
Gregory VII, Pope 92, 195
—— of Nazianzus 160
—— of Rimini 160
—— the Great 160
Gretscher 200
Grien, Hans Baldung 344
Grimm, Jakob 80*n.*, 332, 333, 338
Grisar, Hartmann 17, 18, 59, 157, 158, 187, 189–95, 202, 253
Gropper 261
Guicciardini 253
Güldennapf, Wigand 351
Günther, Franz 144

Hamann 9
Harnack 12, 249
Hartmann, Eduard von 330
Hausmann, Nikolaus 310
Hausrath 187, 194
Haydenreich, Kaspar 177
Hecker, Gerhard 108
Hegel 237
Heinrich von Nassau, Count 123
—— Duke of Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel 181
Henniche-Zerbst, Dr. 361
Henry IV, Emperor (1054–1106) 93
—— VIII of England 214
Herder 9, 202
Herrnschmidt 202
Herwegh 11
Herzog 325
Hilary, Hilarius 160, 212
Hispanus, Dr. Johannes 115
Hoen, Cornelius 156, 260
Hoffmann, Melchior, Anabaptist 156
Holbein 4
Hollen, Gottschalk 180
Hondorff 27*n.*
Hopfer, Daniel 345
—— Hieronymus 345
Hoyer of Mansfeld, Count 358
Hubmaier 293
Hugo of St. Victor 67
Hus 76, 290
Hutt, Hänsel 294
Hutten, Ulrich von 11, 62, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 127, 188, 341
Hutter, Konrad 26, 352

Innocent III, Pope 94
Irenaeus 160

Jahn 11
James, Saint 162
Janssen, Johannes 17, 18, 23, 24, 61, 157
Jarcke 17
Jerome 160, 161
Joachim I of Brandenburg 100, 251
Johann, Elector of Saxony (1525–1532) 251, 346
—— Friedrich, the Magnanimous, Elector of Saxony (1532–1547) 183, 198, 201*n.*, 310, 347
John VIII, Pope 92
Jonas, Justus 147, 309, 311, 348, 350, 361
Joshua 164
Josquin des Prés 171
Jude, Saint 162
Julius II, Pope 38, 167, 180, 187
Jüterborg 102
Juvenal 159

Kallen, Gerhard 307*n.*
Kampschulte 61
Kant, Emmanuel 213, 225
Kapp, J. C. 20
Karlstadt, Andreas 12, 14, 15, 24, 61, 62, 133–8, 143–8,

152–6, 181, 214, 235, 236, 239, 292, 301, 341, 355
Kautsky 14
Kawerau 201*n.*
Kessler 3
Kirn, O. 349
Klajus, Johann 332
Kliefoth 11
Knox, John 195
Kohler, W. 159
Kolde 188*n.*, 355, 359
Köllin, Konrad 181
König, Gustav 3
Köstlin, L. 346
Krause-Berlin, Dr., 361
Kroker, E. 47*n.*, 99*n.*, 125*n.*
Kruciger, Kaspar 80
Krumhaar, C. 358
Küchenmeister 361
Kummer 46*n.*
Kunheim, Margarethe von 125*n.*

Lagarde, Paul de 333, 334
Landau, Johann 27, 348, 361
Lang, Heinrich 12
—— Johann 302, 356
Langbein 202
Laski, Johann 136, 311
Lasphe, Johann Bonemilch von, Bishop of Erfurt 353
Lauterbach 46*n.*, 177, 178
Lawrence, Saint 325
Lefèvre, Jacques 160, 256, 259
Leib, Kilian 24
Lembach 196
Lemnius 182, 210
Leo IV, Pope 92
—— IX, Pope 92
—— X, Pope 100, 101, 103, 110, 188
Lessing, 242
Lietzmann 348
Link, Wenzel 183, 191, 208
Loesche 357
Lombard, Peter 34, 35, 47
Loofs, F. 61, 350
Löscher, Valentin Ernst 20
Loyola 22, 83, 165, 189, 194, 227–33, 261, 262, 282
Lucan 159
Lucke 169*n.*
Ludwig, Veit 20
Luther, Hans 250, 351, 357, 359
—— Heine 358
—— Jakob 351
—— Margarete 15, 250
——, Dr. Martinus *passim*
—— Paul 231
Lyra 35*n.*

Machiavelli 253, 263
Magenbuch, Johann 188
Majunke 362
Mandel 61
Mantovano 263
Mantuanus, Baptista 159
Maraval 17
Margaret of Navarre, Queen 180
Mathesius, Johann 7, 47*n.*, 177–9, 294*n.*, 357
Matstedt, Andreas 99*n.*
Matthias, Flacius Illyricus 200, 235, 242
Mauburnus, Johannes 53
Maximilian I, Emperor (1493–1519), 108, 109, 112, 119, 334
Medici, Cardinal 106, 113, 117, 118
Meinenberg, Michael 347
Meissinger, C. A. 355, 356
Melancthon, Philipp 3, 35*n.*, 47, 86, 120, 139, 141, 143, 146, 147, 154*n.*, 161, 162, 165, 183, 191, 197, 199, 201, 206, 208, 214, 216, 226*n.*, 235, 237, 238, 244, 246, 269, 295, 309, 311, 346, 347, 351, 356

Mensing 181
Menzel 2
Merz, Friedrich von 17
Michael, Saint 92, 258
Michaelangelo 263
Michaelis, J. M. 357
Miltitz, Karl von 99*n.*, 104, 109, 111–13
Minucius Felix 259
Mirandola, Pico della 160
Mohammed 91
Mohler, Adam 16
Möllenberg, W. 358
Momboir, Jean 67, 78, 160
Moritz of Saxony, Duke 216
Mosellan 3, 49, 183
Moses 259
Mosshauer, Paulus 351
Müchler 202
Mühlpfordt, Hermann 142
Müllenhoff, Karl 333
Münzer, Thomas 14, 15, 154*n.*, 292, 294, 301, 306
Murner, Thomas 16, 17, 158, 180
Musculus, Wolfgang 201

Napoleon 249, 258
Nathin, Dr. Johann 52, 353, 354
Neubauer, Theodor Th. 353
Neudecker, Chr. Gottlob 350
Nietzsche, Friedrich 13

Occam 52, 53, 57, 58, 61–9, 79, 88, 134, 160, 245, 246, 254, 272–4
Oergel, G. 353
Oldekop, Jan 40
Ömler, Nikolaus 351
Oppenheim 127
Origen 200
Ostermayr, Wolfgang 72, 353
Ovid 159

Pallavicini 16
Paltz 52
Pastor 61
Paul, Saint 82, 83, 136, 168, 187, 191, 241, 256, 257, 259, 260, 284, 302
Paul of Burgos 35*n.*
Paul III, Pope 112*n.*, 185
—— IV, Pope 195
Paula 185
Paullini, Chr. Franz 360, 361
Paulus, Nikolaus 362
Pelagius 260
Perusco, Mario de 107
Peter the Lombard 160
Peutinger, Dr. Konrad 130
Pflug, Julius 261
Philipp of Hesse, Landgrave 188, 213, 215, 221
Philippus, Magister 161, 168, 195, 208, 233–6, 239, 244, 253, 311, 317
Pirckheimer 181
Pistorius, Johann 18
Plato 265, 272
Plethon, Gemisthos 252
Pliny 159
Plotinus 78, 265
Pomeranus 206
Pomponius Mela 159
Porphyrius 160
Preuss, Hans 344, 347
Prierias *See* Prierio
Prierio, Silvester da 66, 85, 86, 107, 181, 184
Pucci 116
Pufendorf, Samuel 241

Quintilian 159

Rambach, J. J. 350
Ranke, Leopold von 22, 23, 25
Ratzeberger, Matthäus 188, 350, 360, 361

Rauch 2
Rebhan, Nikolaus 360
Rebhaus 359
Reinecke, Hans 351
Rembrandt 330
Rennebecher, Father Bartholomäus 26
Reuchlin 34, 354
Riario, Cardinal 122
Richter, Ludwig 3
Rietschel 1
Ritschl, Albrecht 12, 24
Rivari 187, 189
Robbia, della 263
Rörer, Georg 46*n.*, 80*n.*, 177, 178, 359
Rosenkranz 213*n.*
Rudolf of Swabia 93
Rue, de la 171
Rychardus, Wolfgang 188

Saale, Anna von der 216
—— Margarete von der 213, 215
Sallust 159
Salviati, Cardinal Giovanni 112*n.*
Sanders, Daniel 182
Sannazaro 263
Savonarola 76, 263
Schäfer 159
Schalbe, Heinrich 26, 352, 359, 360
—— Kaspar 26, 352, 359, 360
Schatzgeyer 24, 181
Schaumberg, Silvester von 88
Scheel, O. 315*n.*, 353–5, 360
Schiller 9
Schlaginhaufen, Johann 46*n.*, 177, 178
Schelling 9
Schleiermacher 9, 25, 241
Schmidt, O. G. 159
Schön, Bruno 17
Schönberg, Nikoläus von 106, 109
Schreckenbach-Neubert 345–347, 349
Schubart, Christof 348, 349, 361
Schuchardt 347–8
Schurpff, Professor 151
Schwenckfeld, Ritter Kaspar von 15, 24, 25, 181, 300
Schwerdgeburth 3
Sebastian, Saint 138, 166
—— Johann 172
Sedulius 27*n.*
Selnecker, Nikolaus 360
Semler 8, 12, 16, 21
Seneca 159, 259
Senfl 171
Servetus 235
Sforza, Cardinal 188
Sickengen, Franz von 87, 88, 127, 345
Silius 159
Sixtus IV, Pope 95
Sleidan 179
Spalatin 98, 123, 126, 151, 183, 205, 208, 344
Spangenberg, Cyriacus 3, 6
Stampfer, Jörg 346
Stange 61
Statius 159
Staupitz, Johann von 33, 39, 41–3, 59, 61, 70–3, 78, 79, 105, 106, 114, 191, 236, 353–5
Stein 46*n.*
Steinlein, H. 354, 355
Stolberg, Leopold 16
Storch, Nickel 153*n.*
Strieder, Jokob 27*n.*, 348, 350, 361
Stübner, Marx Thomä 153*n.*
Suarez 241
Suetonius 159
Sylphius 181

Tacitus 159
Taine 249

Tauler, Johann 61, 73–5, 77, 79, 160, 268, 337, 355
Terence 159
Tetzel, Johann 24, 90, 99*n.*, 102, 104, 105, 114, 118
Thiele 201*n.*
Thieme, Ulrich 349
Thomas Aquinas 165, 241, 274, 284
—— Saint 159, 160, 212
Thon, Von 357
Tölpel, dog 175
Trebonius, Johann 351
Tröltsch, Ernst 12, 29, 249, 270, 271, 275–7, 286
Truchsess, Rosine von 228
Trutvetter, Jodokus 352
Tschermak 361

Uhlich, Leberecht 11
Urban II, Pope 93
Urceo, Codro 253
Ursula *See* Cotta
Usingen, Bartholomäus Arnoldi von 24, 78, 181

Valentine, Saint 325
Valla, Lorenzo di 87, 263
Varro 159
Vehus, Chancellor of Baden 130
Veit 99*n.*
Vetter, Conrad 18
Victor II, Pope 93
Vida 263
Virgil 159
Voes, Heinrich 169*n.*
Volta, Gabriel della 105, 106, 108, 114
Voltaire 8
Vopel, Hermann 33
Voss, Johann Heinrich 202

Walch, J. Georg 20, 361
Wallenrodt, Count of 125
Walther, Johann 172, 331
Wattenbach, W. 360
Weida, Markus von 257
Weislinger, Nikolaus 18, 19
Weiss, Albert Maria 61
Weller, Hieronymus 177, 178
Welser, Philippine 198
Wernle 249
Wessel 76
Wette, de 294*n.*
Wetze-Welter 284
Wilhelm I, Margrave 106*n.*
—— IV of Bavaria, Duke 198
Wilken, Ambrosius 144
Witzel, Georg 27, 261, 357, 358, 359
Worst, Hans 179
Wundt 249
Wustmann, G. 315*n.*
Wyclif, John 61, 255, 290

Zerbolt, Gerhard 160
Ziegler, Nikolaus, Chancellor 126*n.*
Zimmermann 14
Zinzendorf, Ludwig 8
Zola, Emile 158
Zwickau 33, 73
Zwilling, Gabriel 139, 140, 144, 145, 146, 150, 152, 154, 156
Zwingli 12, 171, 181, 239, 240, 241, 260, 261, 301

90512

92
L97boehmE